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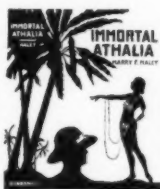
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## Vassalage

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

NOT any more comes quietude to me  
In all my sad interminable days,  
That am not till the last unslaved and free  
Of your ten thousand proud important ways.

The way your yellow hair like twisted gold  
Binds your cool temples in a tawny thrall,  
Or shaken, loosens, lustrous fold on fold  
To curtain your white bosom with its shawl.

And how your hands, two sweet wan butterflies  
Flutter about the flower that is you;  
And your two far unfathomable eyes  
Like quiet woods with wild things leaping through.

I tell my heart I have forgotten these,  
And then some dawn that old desiring comes  
Beating the barriers of my silences  
With throbbing of unconquerable drums.

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## A Note on Depression

*By John Torcross*

WHAT, after all, is depression but the realization that life in the past has presented rosier moments? Thus, it is the speculation upon your return home, as you puff your favorite brand of stogie, that the reason you are sad is due to the fact that the lovely lass you have just engaged in converse is no longer in your company. That one has beheld a thing of beauty is often sufficient to produce a subsequent dejection. The effect is as the reaction of a powerful

stimulant; it is the third hour of abstinence after the fourth cocktail. For we must necessarily have been once jubilant in order to have become depressed. Moreover, it is a thing symbolic of the optimist, the very source of which is sheer gladness. The pessimistic fellow is never depressed. Gloomy, morose—perhaps sullen. But depressed—no!

*Les papillons noirs* are creatures of Pollyanna's garden.





# The Dreamer

*By Ford Douglas*

HE had been working steadily since seven o'clock that morning, snatching only a moment now and then to sharpen his knife. He labored mechanically and with little heed, apparently, to the noise and confusion about him. Various thoughts came to him as his hands flew to their task, but mostly they were of a woman and of three boxes of candy in the drugstore window near where he lived. He had inquired the price of the boxes that morning as he came to work, and he remembered that the white box with the lovely pink roses on it was marked forty cents; that the green box with "For my sweetheart" printed on it in gold letters was sixty cents; but the appearance and the price of the third box momentarily escaped him.

Somewhat annoyed at this, he put aside for the time his lack of memory and began to vision the presentation of his gift. How happy she would be! He could almost see the smiling blue eyes and the cheek dimpling with

delight. But which of the boxes would he give her? The white box with the pink roses? The green box with the gold letters? Or the other one? He concentrated in another attempt to recall the appearance of the third box, but in vain.

At that moment a huge, black hog came screaming along the trolley, fighting uproariously against an end in the hot water tanks beyond. Suspended in midair by a shackle around a hind foot, the squealing porker moved slowly but surely to its fate.

"Let's see," mused the killer. "That other box was kinda long and flat and—"

He suddenly shot his knife forward, but the despairing hog pawing the air desperately with its front legs, disconcerted his aim and the blade went into the throat in a slanting stroke, resulting in a spurt of blood that covered his hand. He gazed at it for a moment and then looking up, exclaimed,

"I remember now. It was a bright red box with blue birds on it!"



THE gods gave man fire and man invented fire engines. They gave him love and he invented marriage.



# The Diamond as Big as the Ritz

[A Complete Novelette]

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

(Author of "This Side of Paradise," "The Beautiful and Damned," etc.)

## CHAPTER I

JOHN T. UNGER came from a family that had been well known in Hades—a small town on the Mississippi River—for several generations. John's father had held the amateur golf championship through many a heated contest; Mrs. Unger was known "from hot-box to hot-bed," as the local phrase went, for her coiffures and her public addresses; and young John T. Unger, who had just turned sixteen, had danced all the latest dances from New York almost before he put on long trousers. And now, for a certain time, he was to be away from home. That respect for a New England education which is the bane of all provincial places, which drains them yearly of their most promising young men, had seized upon his parents. Nothing would suit them but that he should go to St. Midas' School near Boston. Their minds were made up—Hades was too small to hold their darling and gifted son. Now in Hades—as you must know if you ever have been there—the names of the more fashionable preparatory schools and colleges mean very little. The inhabitants have been so long out of the world that, though they make a great show of keeping up to date in dress and manners and literature, they depend to a great extent on hearsay, and a function that in Hades would be considered elaborate would doubtless be hailed by a Chicago beef-princess as "perhaps a little tacky."

John T. Unger was on the eve of

departure. Mrs. Unger, with maternal fatuity, packed his trunks full of linen suits and electric fans, and Mr. Unger presented his son with a brand-new asbestos pocket-book stuffed with money.

"Remember, you are always welcome here," he said. "You can be sure, boy, that we'll keep the home fires burning."

"I know," answered John huskily.

"Don't forget who you are and where you come from," continued his father proudly, "and you can do nothing to harm you. You are an Unger—from Hades."

So the old man and the young shook hands and John walked away with tears streaming from his eyes. Ten minutes later he had passed outside the city limits and he stopped to look back for the last time. Over the gates the old-fashioned Victorian motto seemed strangely attractive to him. His father had tried time and time again to have it changed to something with a little more push and verve about it, such as "Hades—Home of Business Opportunity," or else a plain "Welcome" sign set over a hearty handshake pricked out in electric lights. The old motto was a little depressing, Mr. Unger had thought.

So John took his last look and then set his face resolutely toward his destination. And yet, as he turned away, it seemed to him that the lights of Hades against the sky were full of a warm and passionate beauty.

St. Midas' School is half an hour from Boston in a Rols-Pearse motor

car. The actual distance will never be known, for no one, except John T. Unger, had ever arrived there save in a Rols-Pearse and probably no one ever will again. St. Midas' is the most expensive and most exclusive boys' preparatory school in the world.

John's first two years there passed pleasantly. The fathers of all the boys were great money-kings and John spent his summers visiting at all the fashionable resorts. While he was very fond of all the boys he visited, their fathers struck him as being much of a piece, and in his boyish way he often wondered at their exceeding sameness.

"How do you do, John?" they would say to him. "I'm always glad to meet a school friend of my son's—even though I've been pretty busy this Christmas speeding up production and installing a new triple efficiency system among our efficiency experts."

When John told them where his home was they would ask jovially, "Pretty hot down there?" and John would muster a faint smile and answer, "It certainly is." His response would have been heartier had they not all made this same joke—at best varying it with, "Is it hot enough for you down there?" which he hated just as much.

In the middle of his second year at school, a quiet, handsome boy named Percy Washington had arrived at St. Midas' and been put in John's form. The newcomer was pleasant in his manner and exceedingly well-dressed even for St. Midas', but for some reason he kept himself aloof from the other boys. The only person with whom he was at all intimate was John T. Unger. John frankly admired him, but even to John, Percy was entirely uncommunicative concerning his home or his family. That he was wealthy went without saying, but beyond a few general deductions made from his habits and remarks, John knew very little of his friend, so it promised rich confectionery for his curiosity when Percy invited him to spend the summer at his home "in the West." He accepted without the faintest show of hesitation.

It was only when they were in the train bound westward that Percy became, for the first time, rather communicative. One day while they were eating lunch in the dining-car and discussing the imperfect characters of several of the boys at school, Percy suddenly changed his tone and made an abrupt remark.

"My father," he said, "is by far the richest man in the world."

"Oh," said John politely. He could think of no answer to make to this confidence. He considered "That's very nice," but it sounded a trifle hollow and was on the point of saying, "Really?" but refrained since it would seem to question Percy's statement. And such an astounding statement could scarcely be questioned.

"By far the richest," repeated Percy.

"I was reading in the *World Almanac*," began John, "that there was one man in America with an income of over five million a year and four men with incomes of over three million a year, and—"

"Oh, they're nothing," Percy's mouth was a half-moon of scorn. "Catch-penny capitalists, financial small-fry, petty merchants and money-lenders. My father could buy them out and not know he'd done it."

"But how does he—"

"Why haven't they put down his income tax? Because he doesn't pay any. At least he pays a little one—but he doesn't pay any on his *real* income."

"He must be very rich," said John simply. "I'm glad. I like very rich people. I know that when men get very rich they never have to obey the laws, and I suppose it's logical that if they're rich enough they don't have to pay the income tax either."

"My father doesn't, anyhow."

"The richer a fella is, the better I like him," continued John, a look of passionate frankness upon his dark face. "I visited the Schnlitzer-Murphys last Easter. Vivian Schnlitzer-Murphy had rubies as big as hen's eggs, and sapphires that were like globes with lights inside them—"

"I love jewels," agreed Percy enthusiastically. "Of course I wouldn't want anyone at school to know about it, but I've got quite a collection myself. I used to collect them instead of stamps."

"And diamonds," continued John eagerly. "The Schnlitzer-Murphys had diamonds as big as walnuts—"

"That's nothing." Percy had leaned forward and sunk his voice to a low whisper. "That's nothing at all. My father has a diamond bigger than the Ritz-Carlton Hotel."

## CHAPTER II

THE Montana sunset lay between two mountains like a gigantic bruise from which dark arteries spread themselves over a poisoned sky. An immense distance under the sky crouched the village of Fish, minute, dismal and forgotten. There were twelve men, so it was said, in the village of Fish, twelve somber and inexplicable souls who sucked a lean milk from the almost literally bare rock upon which a mysterious populatory force had begotten them. They had become a race apart, these twelve men of Fish, like some species developed by an early whim of nature which on second thought had abandoned them to struggle and extermination.

Out of the blue-black bruise in the distance, far beneath the sky, crept a long line of moving lights upon the desolation of the land, and the twelve men of Fish gathered like ghosts at the shanty depot to watch the passing of the seven o'clock train, the Transcontinental Express from Chicago. Six times or so a year the Transcontinental Express, through some inconceivable jurisdiction, stopped at the village of Fish, and when this occurred a figure or so would disembark, mount into a buggy that always appeared from out of the dusk and drive off toward the bruised sunset. The observation of this pointless and preposterous phenomenon had become a sort of cult among the men of Fish. To observe, that was all; there remained in them none of the vital quality of illusion which would make

them wonder or speculate, else a religion might have grown up around these mysterious visitations. But the men of Fish were beyond all religion—the barest and most savage tenets of even Christianity could gain no foothold on that barren rock—so there was no altar, no priest, no sacrifice; only each night at seven the silent concourse by the shanty depot, a congregation who lifted up a prayer of dim, anæmic wonder.

On this June night, the Great Brake-man, whom, had they deified anyone, they might well have chosen as their celestial protagonist, had ordained that the seven o'clock train should leave its human (or inhuman) deposit at Fish. At two minutes after seven Percy Washington and John T. Unger disembarked, hurried past the spellbound, the agape, the fearsome eyes of the twelve men of Fish, mounted into a buggy which had obviously appeared from nowhere and drove away in the direction of the bruised sun.

After half an hour, when the twilight had coagulated into dark, the silent negro who was driving the buggy hailed an opaque body somewhere ahead of them in the gloom. As though in sudden response to his cry, it turned upon them a red, luminous disk which regarded them like a malign eye out of the unfathomable night. As they came closer, John saw that it was the tail of an immense automobile, larger and more magnificent than any he had ever seen. Its body was of some gleaming metal richer than nickel and lighter than silver, and the hubs of the wheels were studded with iridescent geometric figures of green and yellow—and John did not dare to guess whether they were of glass or of jewel.

Two negroes, dressed in glittering livery such as one sees in pictures of royal processions in London, were standing at attention beside the car and as the two young men dismounted from the buggy they were greeted in some language which the guest could not understand, but which seemed to be an extreme form of the Southern negro's dialect.

"Get in," said Percy to his friend, as their trunks were tossed to the ebony roof of the limousine. "Sorry we had to bring you this far in that ghastly buggy, but of course it wouldn't do for the people on the train or those God-forsaken fellas in Fish to see this automobile."

"Gosh! What a car!" This ejaculation was provoked by its interior. John saw that the upholstery consisted of a thousand minute and exquisite tapestries of silk, woven with jewels and fine embroideries and set upon a background of cloth of gold. The two arm-chair seats into which the boys sank luxuriously were covered with some stuff that resembled duvetyn but seemed woven in numberless colors of the fine ends of ostrich feathers.

"What a car!" cried John again, in almost painful amazement.

"Nonsense!" Percy laughed. "Why, it's just an old thing we use for a station wagon."

By this time they were gliding along through the darkness toward the break between two mountains which had lately been occupied by the declining sun.

"We'll be there in an hour and a half," announced Percy, looking at the clock. "I may as well tell you it's not going to be like anything you ever saw before."

If the car was any indication of what John would see when they reached Percy's home, he was prepared to be astonished indeed. The simple piety prevalent in Hades has the earnest worship of and respect for riches as the first article of its creed—had John felt or thought otherwise than radiantly humble before it, his parents would have turned away in horror at the blasphemy.

They had now reached and were entering the break between the two mountains and almost immediately the way became much rougher.

"If the moon shone down here, you'd see that we're in a great big gulch," said Percy, trying to peer out of the window. He spoke a few words into the mouthpiece and immediately the footman

turned on a tremendous searchlight and swept the hillsides with its immense beam.

"Rocky, you see. An ordinary car would be knocked to pieces in half an hour. In fact, it'd take a tank to navigate it unless you knew the way. You notice we're going uphill now. Pretty soon we'll show you a trick."

They were obviously ascending, and within a few minutes the car was crossing a high rise where they caught a glimpse of a pale green moon newly risen in the distance. The car stopped suddenly and several figures took shape out of the dark beside it—these were negroes also. Again the two young men were saluted in the same dimly recognizable dialect; then the negroes set to work and four immense cables dangling from overhead were attached with hooks to the hubs of the great jeweled wheels. At a gruff "Hey-yah!" John felt the car being lifted slowly from the ground—up and up—clear of the tallest rocks on both sides—then higher, until he could see a wavy, moonlit valley stretched out before him in sharp contrast to the uncharted quagmire of rocks that they had just left. Only on one side was there still rock—and then suddenly there was no rock beside them or anywhere around.

It was apparent that they had surmounted some immense knife-blade of stone, projecting perpendicularly into the air. In a moment they were going down again—down and down—finally with a soft bump they were landed once more upon the smooth earth.

"The worst is over," said Percy, squinting out the window. "It's only five miles from here, and our own road—tapestry brick—all the way. This belongs to us."

"I wish I could see."

"You'll be able to when we're out of the shadow of this cliff. This is where the United States ends, father says."

"What? Are we in Canada?"

"We are not. We're in the middle of the Montana Rockies. But you are now on the only five square miles of land in



the country that's never been surveyed."

"Why hasn't it? Did they forget it?"

"No," said Percy, grinning, "they tried to do it three times. The first time my grandfather corrupted a whole department of the State survey; the second time he had the official maps of the United States tinkered with—that held them for fifteen years. The last time was harder. It was in 1916. My father fixed it so that their compasses were in the strongest magnetic field ever artificially set up. He had a whole set of surveying instruments made with a slight defection that would allow for this territory not to appear and he substituted them for the ones that were to be used. Then he had a river deflected and he had what looked like a village built up on its banks—so that they'd see it and think it was a town ten miles farther up the valley. There's only one thing my father's afraid of," he concluded, "only one thing in the world that could be used to find us out."

"What's that?"

Percy sank his voice to a whisper.

"Aeroplanes," he breathed. "We've got half a dozen anti-aircraft guns and we've arranged it so far—but there've been a few deaths and a great many prisoners. Not that we mind *that*, you know, father and I, but it upsets mother and the girls and there's always the chance that some time we won't be able to arrange it."

Shreds and tatters of chinchilla, courtesy clouds in the green moon's heaven, were passing the green moon like precious Eastern stuffs paraded for the inspection of some Tartar Khan. It seemed to John that it was day and that he was looking at some lads sailing above him in the air, showering down tracts and patent medicine circulars with their messages of hope for despairing, rockbound hamlets. It seemed to him that he could see them look down out of the clouds and stare—and stare at whatever there was to stare at in this place whither he was bound—What then? Were they induced to land by some insidious device there to be immured in a wretched dungeon far from

patent medicines and from tracts until the judgment day—or, should they fail to fall into the trap, did a quick puff of smoke and the sharp round of a splitting shell bring them drooping to earth—and "upset" Percy's mother and sisters. John shook his head and the wraith of a hollow laugh issued silently from his parted lips. What desperate transaction lay hidden here? What a moral expedient of a bizarre Croesus? What terrible and golden mystery? . . .

The chinchilla clouds had drifted past now and outside the Montana night was bright as day. The tapestry brick of the road was smooth to the tread of the great tires as they rounded a still, moonlit lake; they passed into darkness for a moment, a pine grove, pungent and cool, then they came out into a broad avenue of lawn and John's exclamation of pleasure was simultaneous with Percy's taciturn "We're home."

Full in the light of the stars, an exquisite chateau rose from the borders of the lake, climbed in marble radiance half the height of an adjoining mountain, then melted in grace, in perfect symmetry, in translucent feminine languor, into the massed darkness of a forest of pine. The many towers, the slender tracery of the sloping parapets, the chiseled wonder of a thousand yellow windows with their oblongs and hexagons and triangles of golden light, the shattered softness of the intersecting planes of star-shine and blue shade, all trembled on John's spirit like a chord of music. On one of the towers, the tallest, the blackest at its base, an arrangement of exterior lights at the top made a sort of floating fairyland—and as John gazed up in warm enchantment the faint acciaccare sound of violins drifted down in a rococo harmony that was like nothing he had ever heard before. Then in a moment the car stopped before wide, high marble steps around which the night air was fragrant with a host of flowers. At the top of the steps two great doors swung silently open and amber light flooded out upon the darkness, silhouetting the figure of an exquisite lady with black, high-piled

hair, who held out her arms toward them.

With a tranced step, as though walking in a dream, John dismounted from the car.

"Mother," Percy was saying, "this is my friend John Unger, from Hades."

Afterward John remembered that first night as a daze of many colors, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice in love and of the beauty of things, lights and shadows and motions and faces, such as he had never known. There was a white-haired man who stood drinking a many-hued cordial from a crystal thimble set on a golden stem. There was a girl with a flowery face, dressed like Titania with braided sapphires in her hair. There was a room where the solid, soft gold of the walls yielded to the pressure of his hand and a room that was like a platonian conception of the ultimate prison—ceiling, floor and all—it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape, until, lit with tall violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish or dream.

Through a maze of these rooms the two boys wandered. Sometimes the floor under their feet would flame in brilliant patterns from concealed lighting below, patterns of barbarous clashing colors, of pastel delicacy, of sheer whiteness or of subtle and intricate mosaic, surely from some mosque on the Adriatic Sea. Sometimes beneath layers of thick crystal he would see blue or green water swirling, inhabited by vivid fish and growths of rainbow foliage. Then they would be treading on furs of every texture and color or along corridors of palest ivory, unbroken as though carved complete from the gigantic tusks of dinosaurs extinct before the age of man. . . .

Then a hazily remembered transition and they were at dinner—where each plate was of two almost imperceptible layers of solid diamond between which

was curiously worked a filigree of emerald design, green air sliced from a shaving. Music, plangent and unobtrusive, drifted down through far corridors—his chair, feathered and curved treacherously to his back, seemed to engulf and overpower him as he drank his first glass of port. He tried drowsily to answer a question that had been asked him, but the honey luxury that clasped his body added to the illusion of sleep—jewels, fabrics, wines and metals blurred before his eyes into a sweet mist. . . .

"Yes," he replied with a polite effort, "it certainly is hot enough for me down there."

He managed to add a ghostly laugh; then, without movement, without resistance, he seemed to float off and away, leaving an iced dessert that was pink as a dream. . . . He fell asleep.

When he awoke he knew that several hours had passed. He was in a great quiet room with ebony walls and a dull illumination that was too faint, too subtle, to be called a light. His young host, clad in a dressing-gown of red brocade, was standing over him.

"You fell asleep at dinner," Percy was saying. "I nearly did, too—it was such a treat to be comfortable again after this year of school. Servants undressed and bathed you while you were sleeping."

"Is this a bed or a cloud?" sighed John. "Percy, Percy—before you go, I want to apologize."

"For what?"

"For doubting you when you said you had a diamond as big as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel."

Percy smiled.

"I thought you didn't believe me. It's that mountain, you know."

"What mountain?"

"The mountain the chateau rests on. It's not very big, for a mountain. But except about fifty feet of sod and gravel on top it's solid diamond. One diamond, one cubic mile without a flaw. Aren't you listening? Say—"

But John T. Unger had again fallen asleep.

## CHAPTER III

MORNING. As he awoke he perceived drowsily that the room had at the same moment become dense with sunlight. After a while he realized that the ebony panels of one wall had slid aside on a sort of track, leaving his chamber half open to the day. A large negro in a white flannel uniform stood beside his bed.

"Good evening," muttered John, summing his brains from the wild places.

"Good morning, sir. Are you ready for your bath, sir? Oh, don't get up—I'll put you in, if you'll just unbutton your pajamas—there. Thank you, sir."

John lay quietly as his pajamas were removed—amused and delighted; he expected to be lifted like a child by this black Gargantua who was tending him, but nothing of the sort happened; instead he felt the bed tilt up slowly on its side—he began to roll, startled at first, in the direction of the wall, but when he reached the wall its drapery gave way and sliding two yards farther down a fleecy incline he plumped gently into water the same temperature as his body.

He looked about him. The runway or rollway on which he had arrived had folded gently back into place. He had been projected into another chamber and was sitting in a sunken bath with his head just above the level of the floor. All about him, lining the walls of the room and the sides and bottom of the bath itself, was a blue aquarium, and gazing through the crystal surface on which he sat, he could see fishes swimming among amber lights and even gliding without curiosity past his outstretched toes, which were separated from them only by the thickness of the crystal. From overhead, sunlight came down through sea-green glass, making a colorful nautilus of the entire chamber.

"I suppose, sir, that you'd like hot rosewater and soapsuds this morning, sir—and perhaps cold salt water to finish."

The large negro in white flannel was standing beside him.

"Yes," agreed John, smiling inanely, "as you please." Any idea of ordering this bath according to his own meagre standards of living would have been priggish and not a little wicked.

The negro pressed a button and a warm rain began to fall, apparently from overhead, but really, so John discovered after a moment, from a fountain arrangement nearby. The water turned to a pale rose color and jets of liquid soap spurted into it from four miniature walrus heads at the corners of the bath. In a moment a dozen little paddle wheels, fixed to the sides, had churned the mixture into a radiant rainbow of pink foam which enveloped him softly with its delicious lightness and burst in shining, rosy bubbles here and there about him.

"Shall I turn on the moving-picture machine, sir?" suggested the negro deferentially. "There's a good one-reel comedy in this machine today, or I can put in a serious piece in a moment if you prefer it."

"No, thanks," answered John, politely but firmly. He was enjoying his bath far too deeply to desire any distraction. But distraction came. In a moment he was listening intently to the sound of flutes from just outside, flutes dripping a melody that was like a waterfall, cool and green as the room itself, accompanying a frothy piccolo, in play more fragile than the lace of suds that covered and charmed him.

After a cold salt water bracer and a cold fresh finish, he stepped out and into a fleecy robe that dried him immediately, and upon a couch covered with the same material he was rubbed with oil, alcohol and spice. Later he sat in a voluptuous chair while he was shaved and his hair trimmed.

"Mr. Percy is waiting in your sitting-room," said the negro when these operations were finished. He handed John a fresh suit of underwear and held up his dressing-gown. "My name is Gygsun, Mr. Unger, sir. I am to see to Mr. Unger every morning."

John walked out into the brisk sunshine of his living-room, where he found breakfast waiting for him and Percy, dressed in white kid knickerbockers, smoking in an easy chair.

#### CHAPTER IV

THIS is a story of the Washington family as Percy sketched it for John during breakfast.

The father of the present Mr. Washington had been a Virginian, a direct descendant of George Washington, Lord Fairfax and Lord Baltimore. At the close of the Civil War he was a twenty-five-year-old Colonel with tremendous ambition, a played-out plantation and about a thousand dollars in gold.

Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington, for that was the young Colonel's name, decided to present the Virginia estate to his younger brother and go West. He selected two dozen of the most faithful blacks, who, of course, worshipped him, and bought twenty-five tickets to Montana, where he intended to take out land in their names and start a sheep and cattle ranch.

When he had been in Montana for less than a month and things were going very poorly indeed, he stumbled on his great discovery. He had lost his way when riding by himself in the hills, and after a day and a night without food he began to grow exceedingly hungry. As he was without his rifle he was forced to pursue a gray squirrel, and in the course of the pursuit he noticed that it was carrying something shiny in its mouth. Just before it vanished into its hole—for Providence did not intend that this particular squirrel should alleviate his hunger—it dropped its burden. With a shout of wrath Fitz-Norman plunged his hand in after the rodent, but for reward received only a sharp bite on his finger. Then he gave up and sitting down to consider the situation his eye was caught by a gleam in the grass beside him. He put out his hand curiously—then he jumped to his feet. In ten seconds he had completely lost his appetite and

gained one hundred thousand dollars. The squirrel, which had refused with annoying persistence to become food, had made him a present of a large and perfect diamond.

Late that night he found his way to camp and twelve hours later all the males among his darkies were back by the squirrel hole digging furiously at the side of the mountain. He told them he had discovered a rhinestone mine, and, as only one or two of them had ever seen even a small diamond before, they believed him, without a question.

When the magnitude of his discovery became apparent to him, he found himself in a quandary. The mountain was a diamond—it was literally nothing else but solid diamond. He filled four saddle bags full of glittering samples and started on horseback for far St. Paul. There he managed to dispose of half a dozen small stones—then he tried a larger one and a storekeeper fainted and Fitz-Norman was arrested as a public disturber. He escaped from jail and caught the train for New York, where he sold a few medium-sized diamonds and received in exchange about two hundred thousand dollars in gold. But he did not dare to produce any exceptional gens—in fact he left New York just in time. Tremendous excitement had been created in jewelry circles, not so much by the size of his diamonds as by their appearance in the city from mysterious sources. Wild rumors became current that a diamond mine had been discovered in the Catskills, on the Jersey Coast, on Long Island, beneath Washington Square, and excursion trains, packed with men carrying picks and shovels, began to leave New York hourly, bound for various neighboring El Dorados. But by that time young Fitz-Norman was on his way back to Montana.

By the end of a fortnight he had evolved a plan of campaign. He estimated that the diamond in the mountain was approximately equal in quantity to all the rest of the diamonds known to exist in the world. There was no valuing it by any regular computation, how-

ever, for it was *one solid diamond*—and if it were offered for sale not only would the bottom fall out of the market, but also, if the value should vary with its size in the usual arithmetical progression, there would not be enough gold in the world to buy a tenth part of it. And what could anyone do with a diamond that size?

It was an amazing predicament. He was, in one sense, the richest man that ever lived—and yet was he worth anything at all? If his secret should transpire there was no telling to what measures the Government might resort in order to prevent a panic, in gold as well as in jewels. They might take over the claim immediately and institute a monopoly.

There was no alternative—he must market his mountain in secret. It would be comparable to concealing a mammoth in a music room, but—there you were.

He sent South for his younger brother and put him in charge of his colored following—middle-aged, loyal and docile, all of them; Fitz-Norman was glad of that. They were darkeys who had never realized that slavery was abolished. To make sure of this, he read them a proclamation that he had composed, which announced that General Forrest had reorganized the shattered Southern armies and defeated the North in one pitched battle. The negroes believed him implicitly. They passed a vote declaring it a good thing and held revival services immediately.

Fitz-Norman himself set out for foreign parts with one hundred thousand dollars and two trunks filled with rough diamonds of all sizes. He went to San Francisco and sailed for the South Sea Islands. There he chartered a Chinese junk and was landed in Russian territory just six months after his departure from Montana. Five weeks later he was in St. Petersburg. He took obscure lodgings and called immediately upon the court jeweler, giving a false name and address and announcing that he had a diamond for the Czar. He remained in St. Petersburg for two weeks,

in constant danger of being murdered, living from lodging to lodging and afraid to visit his trunks more than three or four times during the whole fortnight.

On his promise to return in a year with larger and finer stones, he was allowed to leave for India. Before he left, however, the Court Treasurers had deposited to his credit, in American banks, the sum of fifteen million dollars—under four different aliases.

He returned to America in 1868, having been gone a little over two years. He had visited the Capitals of twenty-two countries and talked with five emperors, eleven kings, three princes, a shah, a khan and a sultan. At that time Fitz-Norman estimated his own wealth at one billion dollars. One fact worked consistently against the disclosure of his secret. No one of his larger diamonds remained in the public eye for a week before being invested with a history of enough fatalities, amours, revolutions and wars to have occupied it from the days of the first Babylonian Empire.

From 1870 until his death in 1900, the history of Fitz-Norman Washington was a long epic in gold. There were side issues, of course—he evaded the surveys, he married a Virginia lady by whom he had a single son, and he was compelled, due to a series of unfortunate complications, to murder his brother, whose unfortunate habit of drinking himself into an indiscreet stupor had several times endangered their safety. But very few other murders stained these happy years of progress and expansion.

Just before he died he changed his policy and with all but a few million dollars of his outside wealth bought up platinum and other rare minerals in bulk which he deposited in the safety vaults of banks all over the world, marked as *bric-à-brac*. His son, Braddock Tarleton Washington, followed this policy on an even more intensive scale. The platinum was converted into the rarest of all elements—radium—so that the equivalent of a billion dollars in



gold could be placed in a receptacle no bigger than a cigar box.

When Fitz-Norman had been dead three years, his son, Braddock, decided that the business had gone far enough. The amount of wealth that he and his father had taken out of the mountain was beyond all exact computation. He kept a note-book in cipher in which he set down the approximate quantity of radium in each of the thousand banks he patronized, and recorded the alias under which it was held. Then he did a very simple thing—he sealed up the mine.

He sealed up the mine. What had been taken out of it would support all the Washingtons yet to be born in unparalleled luxury for countless generations. His one care must be the protection of his secret lest in the possible panic attendant on its discovery he should be reduced with all the property holders in the world to utter poverty.

This was the family among whom John T. Unger was staying. This was the story he heard in his silver-walled living-room the morning after his arrival. It gave him a distinct feeling of uneasy fear.

## CHAPTER V

WHEN he had finished breakfast, John, realizing that Percy would want to see his parents alone, found his way out to the great marble entrance and looked curiously at the scene before him. The whole valley, from the diamond mountain against which the chateau reclined to the steep granite cliff five miles away over which they had been lowered the night before, still gave off a breath of golden haze which hovered idly above the fine sweep of lawns and marble lakes and brilliant gardens. Here and there clusters of elms and English oaks made delicate groves of patterned shade, contrasting strangely with the tough masses of pine forest that held fast the surrounding hills in a grip of dark blue-green. Even as John looked he saw three fawns in single file patter out from one clump about a half

mile away and disappear in awkward gayety into the black-ribbed half-light of another. John would not have been surprised to see a goat-foot piping his way among the trees or to catch a glimpse of pink nymph-skin and flying yellow hair between the greenest of the green leaves.

In some such cool hope he descended the marble steps, disturbing faintly the sleep of two silky Russian wolfhounds at the bottom, and set off along a walk of white and blue brick that seemed to lead in no particular direction.

He was enjoying himself as much as he was able. It is youth's felicity as well as its insufficiency that it can never live in the present, but must always be measuring up the day against its own radiantly imagined future—flowers and gold, girls and stars, they are only pre-figurations and prophecies of that incomparable, unattainable young dream.

John rounded a soft corner where the massed rosebushes filled the air with heavy scent, and struck off across a park toward a patch of moss under some trees. He had never lain upon moss and he wanted to see whether it was really soft enough to justify the use of its name as an adjective. Then he saw a girl coming toward him over the grass, and it occurred to him instantly that she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen.

She was dressed in a white little gown that came just below her knees, and a wreath of mignonettes clasped with blue slices of sapphire bound up her hair. Her pink bare feet scattered the dew before them as she came. She was younger than John—not more than sixteen.

"Hello," she cried softly, "I'm Kismine."

She was much more than that to John already. He advanced toward her, scarcely moving as he drew near lest he should tread on her bare toes.

"You haven't met me," said her soft voice. Her blue eyes added, "Oh, but you've missed a great deal!" . . . "You met my sister, Jasmine, last night. I was sick with lettuce poisoning," went

on her soft voice, and her eyes continued, "and when I'm sick I'm sweet—and when I'm well."

"You have made an enormous impression on me," said John's eyes, "and I'm not so slow myself"—"How do you do?" said his voice. "I hope you're better this morning."—"You darling," added his eyes tremulously.

John observed that they had been walking along the path. On her suggestion they sat down together upon the moss, the softness of which he failed to determine.

He was critical about girls. A single defect—a thick ankle, a hoarse voice, a glass eye—was enough to make him utterly indifferent. And here for the first time in his life he was beside a maiden who seemed to him the incarnation of physical perfection.

"Are you from the East?" asked Kismine with unconcealed eager interest.

"No," said John simply, "I'm from Hades."

Either she had never heard of Hades or she could think of no pleasant comment to make upon it, for she did not discuss it further.

"I'm going East to school this fall," she said. "D'you think I'll like it? I'm going to New York to Miss Bulge's. It's very strict, but you see over the week-ends I'm going to live at home with the family in our New York house, because father heard that the girls had to go walking two by two. He said he would not have minded if we walked single file because many a good man—Indian or just unfortunate—had walked in single file, but no member of his family would ever walk in a pair."

"Your father wants you to be proud," observed John.

"We are," she answered, her eyes shining with dignity. "None of us has ever been punished. Father said we never should be. Once when my sister Jasmine was a little girl she pushed him downstairs and he just got up and limped away."

John was wishing that she would talk on forever—or at least until lunch time.

"Did you like mother?" she de-

manded. "Mother was—well, a little startled when she heard that you were from—from where you *are* from, you know. She said that when she was a young girl—but then, you see, she's a Spaniard and very old-fashioned."

"Do you spend much time out here?" asked John, to conceal the fact that he was somewhat hurt by this remark. It seemed an unkind allusion to his provincialism.

"A few months of every year. Percy and Jasmine and I are here every summer, but next summer Jasmine is going to Newport. She's coming out in London a year from this fall. She'll be presented at court."

"Do you know," began John hesitantly, "you're a funny girl."

"Why?"

"You're much more sophisticated than I thought you were when I first saw you."

"Oh, no, I'm not," she exclaimed hurriedly. "Oh, I wouldn't think of being. I think that sophisticated young people are *terribly* common, don't you? I'm not at all, really. Truly I'm not. If you say I am I'm going to cry."

She was so distressed that her lip was trembling. John was impelled to say:

"I didn't mean that; I only said it to tease you."

"Because I wouldn't mind if I *were*," she persisted, "but I'm *not*. I'm very innocent and girlish. I never smoke or drink or read anything except poetry. I know scarcely any mathematics or chemistry. I dress *very* simply—in fact I scarcely dress at all. I think sophisticated is the last thing you can say about me. I believe that girls ought to enjoy their youths in a wholesome way."

"I do too," said John heartily.

Kismine was cheerful again. She smiled at him and the tiniest still-born tear dropped from the corner of one blue eye.

"I like you," she whispered intimately. "Are you going to spend all your time with Percy while you're here, or will you be nice to me? Just think—

I'm absolutely fresh ground. I've never had a boy in love with me in all my life. I've never been allowed to even *see* boys alone—except Percy. I came all the way out here into this grove hoping to run into you where the family wouldn't be around."

Deeply flattered, John bowed from the hips as he had been taught at dancing school in Hades.

"We'd better go now," said Kismine sweetly. "I have to be with mother at eleven. You haven't asked me to kiss you once. I thought boys always did that nowadays."

John drew himself up proudly.

"Some of them do," he answered, "but not me. Girls don't do that sort of thing—in Hades."

Side by side they walked back toward the house.

## CHAPTER VI

JOHN stood facing Mr. Braddock Washington in the full sunlight. The elder man was about forty with a proud, vacuous face, intelligent eyes and a robust figure. In the mornings he smelt of horses—the best horses. He carried a plain walking-stick of gray willow with a single large opal for a grip. He and Percy were showing John around.

"The slaves' quarters are there." His walking-stick indicated a low cloister of marble on their left that ran in graceful Gothic along the side of the mountain. "In my youth I was distracted for a while from the business of life by a period of absurd idealism. During that time they lived in luxury. For instance, I equipped every one of their rooms with a tile bath."

"I suppose," ventured John, with an ingratiating laugh, "that they used the bathtub to keep coal in. Mr. Schnlitzer-Murphy told me that once he—"

"The opinions of Mr. Schnlitzer-Murphy are of little importance, I should imagine," interrupted Braddock Washington coldly. "My slaves did not keep coal in their bathtubs. They had orders to bathe every day, and they did.

If they hadn't I might have ordered a sulphuric acid shampoo. I discontinued the baths for quite another reason. Several of them caught cold and died. Water is not good for certain races—except as a beverage."

John laughed and then nervously decided to nod his head in sober agreement. Braddock Washington made him inexplicably uncomfortable.

"All these negroes are descendants of the ones my father brought North with him. There are about two hundred and fifty now. You notice that they've lived so long apart from the world that their original dialect has become an almost indistinguishable patois. We bring a few of them up to speak English—my secretary and two or three of the house servants.

"This is the golf course," he continued as they strolled along the velvet winter grass. "It's all a green, you see—no fairway, no rough, no hazards."

He smiled pleasantly at John.

"Many men in the cage, father?" asked Percy suddenly.

Braddock Washington stumbled and let forth an involuntary curse.

"One less than there should be," he ejaculated darkly—and then added after a moment, "We've had difficulties."

"Mother was telling me," exclaimed Percy, "that Italian teacher—"

"A ghastly error," said Braddock Washington angrily. "But of course there's a good chance that we may have got him. Perhaps he fell somewhere in the woods or stumbled over a cliff. And then there's always the probability that if he did get away his story wouldn't be believed. They'd say it was too preposterous. Nevertheless, I've had two dozen men looking for him in different towns around here."

"And no luck?"

"Some. Fourteen of them reported to my agent that they'd killed a man answering to that description, but of course it was probably only the reward they were after—"

He broke off. They had come to a large cavity in the earth about the circumference of a merry-go-round and

covered by a strong iron grating. Braddock Washington beckoned to John and pointed his cane down through the grating. John stepped to the edge and gazed. Immediately his ears were assailed by a wild clamor from below.

"Come on down to Hell!"

"Hello, kiddo, how's the air up there?"

"Hey! Throw us a rope!"

"Got an old doughnut, Buddy, or a couple of second-hand sandwiches?"

"Say, fella, if you'll push down that guy you're with we'll show you a quick disappearance scene."

"Paste him one for me, will you?"

It was too dark to see clearly into the pit below, but John could tell from the coarse optimism and rugged vitality of the remarks and voices that they proceeded from middle-class Americans of the more spirited type. Then Mr. Washington put out his cane and touched a button in the grass, and the scene below sprang into light.

"These are some adventurous mariners who had the misfortune to discover El Dorado," he remarked.

Below them there had appeared a large hollow in the earth shaped like the interior of a bowl. The sides were steep and apparently of polished glass, and on its slightly concave surface stood about two dozen men clad in the half costume, half uniform, of aviators. Their upturned faces lit with wrath, with malice, with despair, with cynical humor, were covered by long growths of beard; excepting a few who had pined perceptibly away, they seemed to be a well-fed and healthy lot.

Braddock Washington drew a wicker garden chair to the edge of the pit and sat down.

"Well, how are you, boys?" he inquired genially.

A chorus of execration in which all joined except a few too dispirited to cry out, rose up into the sunny air, but Braddock Washington heard it with unruffled composure. When its last echo had died away he spoke again.

"Have you thought up a way out of your difficulty?"

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From here and there among them a remark floated up.

"We decided to stay here for love!"

"Bring us up there and we'll find us a way!"

Braddock Washington waited until they were again quiet. Then he said:

"I've told you the situation. I don't want you here. I wish to heaven I'd never seen you. Your own curiosity got you here and any time that you can think of a way out of the difficulty, one which protects me and my interests, I'll be glad to consider it. But so long as you confine your efforts to digging tunnels—yes, I know about the new one you've started—you won't get very far. This isn't as hard on you as you make it out, with all your howling for the loved ones at home. If you were the type who worried much about the loved ones at home you'd never have taken up aviation."

A tall, dark-haired man moved apart from the others, and held up his hand to call his captor's attention to what he was about to say.

"Let me ask you a few questions!" he cried. "You pretend to be a fair-minded man."

"How absurd. How could a man of my position be fair-minded toward you? You might as well speak of a Spaniard being fair-minded toward a piece of steak."

At this harsh observation the faces of the two dozen steaks fell, but the tall dark-haired man continued:

"All right!" he cried. "We've argued this out before. You're not a humanitarian and you're not fair-minded, but you're human—at least you say you are—and you ought to be able to put yourself in our place for long enough to think how—how—how—"

"How what?" demanded Washington coldly.

"—how unnecessary—"

"Not to me."

"Well,—how cruel—"

"We've covered that. Cruelty doesn't exist where self-preservation is involved. You're soldiers; you know that. Try another."

"Well, then, how stupid."

"There," admitted Washington, "I grant you that. But try to think of an alternative. I've offered to have all or any of you painlessly executed if you wish. I've offered to have your wives, sweethearts, children and mothers kidnapped and brought out here. I'll enlarge your place down there and feed and clothe you the rest of your lives. If there was some method of producing permanent amnesia I'd have all of you operated on and released immediately, somewhere outside of my preserves. But that's as far as my ideas go."

"How about trusting us not to peach on you?" cried someone.

"You don't proffer that suggestion seriously," said Washington with an expression of scorn. "I did take out one man to teach my daughter Italian. Let me tell you what happened. Last week he got away."

A wild yell of jubilation went up suddenly from two dozen throats and a pandemonium of joy ensued. The prisoners danced and cheered and sang and wrestled with each other in a sudden uprush of animal spirits. They even ran up the glass sides of the bowl as far as they could, and slid back upon the natural cushions of their bodies. The black-haired man started a song in which they all joined—

*"Oh, we'll hang the kaiser  
On a sour apple tree—"*

Braddock Washington sat in inscrutable silence until the song was over.

"You see," he remarked when he could gain a modicum of attention. "I bear you no ill-will. I like to see you enjoying yourselves. That's why I didn't tell you all the story at once. The man—What was his name? Crittichiello?—was shot by some of my agents in fourteen different places."

Not guessing that the places referred to were cities, the tumult of rejoicing subsided immediately.

"Nevertheless," cried Washington with a touch of anger, "he tried to run away. Do you expect me to take chances with any of you after an experience like that?"

Again a series of ejaculations went up.

"Sure!"

"Would your daughter like to learn Chinese?"

"Hey, I can speak Italian! My mother was a wop."

"Maybe she'd like t'learn a speak N'Yawk!"

"If she's the little one with the big blue eyes I can teach her a lot of things better than Italian."

"I know some French songs—and I could hammer brass once't."

Mr. Washington reached forward suddenly with his cane and pushed the button in the grass so that the picture below went out instantly and there remained only that great dark mouth covered dismally with the black teeth of the grating.

"Hey!" called a single voice from below, "you ain't goin' away without givin' us your blessing?"

But Mr. Washington, followed by the two boys, was already strolling on toward the ninth hole on the golf course, as though the pit and its contents were no more than a hazard over which his facile iron had triumphed with ease.

## CHAPTER VII

JULY under the lea of the diamond mountain was a month of blanket nights and of warm, glowing days when John and Kismine walked clandestine paths together. Almost every morning they met in the grove of their first encounter and spent a halcyon hour. John neglected to confide anything of these meetings to Percy, perhaps from shyness, perhaps lest the cognizance of a third party should spoil a little the remembered freshness of this sylvan love affair. For John and Kismine were in first love. He did not know that the little gold football (inscribed with the words *St. Midas'* and the legend *Pro deum et patrium et St. Midam*) which he had given her rested on a platinum chain next to her bosom. But it did. And she for her part was not aware that a large sapphire which had dropped



one day from her simple coiffure was stowed away tenderly in John's jewel box.

Late one afternoon when the ruby music room was quiet and dreamy, they spent an hour there together. He held her hand and she gave him such a look that he whispered her name aloud. She bent toward him—then hesitated.

"Did you say 'Kismine'," she asked softly, "or—"

She had wanted to be sure. She thought she might have misunderstood.

Neither of them had ever kissed before, but in the course of an hour it seemed to make little difference.

The afternoon drifted away. That night when the moon was green and a last breath of music drifted down from the highest tower, they each lay happily awake, reconstructing the separate minutes of the day. They had decided to be married as soon as possible.

#### CHAPTER VIII

EVERY day Mr. Washington and the two young men went hunting or fishing in the deep forests or played golf around the somnolent course—games in which John diplomatically allowed his host to win—or swam in the mountain coolness of the lake. John found Mr. Washington a pleasant if somewhat exacting personality—utterly uninterested in any ideas or opinions except his own. Mrs. Washington was aloof and reserved at all times. She was apparently indifferent to her two daughters and entirely absorbed in her son Percy with whom she held interminable conversations in rapid Spanish at dinner.

Jasmine, the elder daughter, who resembled Kismine in appearance—except that she was somewhat bow-legged, and terminated in large hands and feet—was utterly unlike her in temperament. She was enormously domestic. Her favorite books had to do with poor girls who kept house for widowed fathers. John learned from Kismine that Jasmine had never recovered from the shock and disappointment caused her by the termination of

the World War, just as she was about to start for Europe as a canteen expert. She had even pined away for a time, and Braddock Washington had taken steps to promote a new war in the Balkans for her benefit—but she had seen a photograph of some wounded Serbian soldiers and lost interest in the whole proceedings. But Percy and Kismine seemed to have inherited the arrogant attitude in all its harsh magnificence from their father. A chaste and consistent selfishness ran through their ideas and remarks.

John was ever enchanted by the wonders of the chateau and the valley. Braddock Washington, so Percy told him, had caused to be kidnapped a landscape gardener, an architect, a designer of stage settings and a French decadent poet left over from the last century. He had put his entire force of negroes at their disposal, guaranteed to supply them with any materials that the world could offer, and left them to work out some ideas of their own. But one by one they had shown their uselessness. The decadent poet had at once begun wailing his separation from the boulevards in spring—he made some vague remarks about spices, apes and ivories, but said nothing that was of any practical value. The stage designer on his part wanted to make the whole valley a series of tricks and sensational effects—a state of things that the Washingtons would soon have got tired of. And as for the architect and the landscape gardener, they thought only in terms of convention. They must make this like this and that like that.

But they had, at least, solved the problem of what was to be done with them—they all went mad early one morning after spending the night in a single room trying to agree upon the location of a fountain, and were now confined very comfortably in an insane asylum at Westport, Connecticut.

"But," inquired John curiously, "who did plan all your wonderful reception rooms and halls and approaches and bathrooms—?"

"Well," answered Percy, "I blush to tell you, but it was a moving-picture fella. He was the only man we found who was used to playing with an unlimited amount of money, and though he tucked his napkin in his collar and couldn't read or write, he did manage to brighten up the place considerably."

As August drew to a close John began to regret that he must soon go back to school. He and Kismine had decided to elope the following June.

"It would be nicer to be married here," Kismine confessed, "but of course I could never get father's permission to marry you at all. Next to that I'd rather elope. It's terrible for wealthy people to be married in America at present—they always have to send out bulletins to the press saying that they're going to be married in remnants, when what they mean is just a peck of old second-hand diamonds and some used lace worn once by the Empress Eugenie. It would make me feel so hypocritical."

"I know," agreed John fervently. "When I was visiting the Schnlitzer-Murphys, the oldest daughter, Gwendolyn, married young Burton Hedge, whose father owns half of West Virginia. She wrote home saying what a tough struggle she was carrying on on his salary as a bank clerk—and then she ended up by saying that 'Thank God, I have four good maids anyhow, and that helps a little.'"

"It's absurd," commented Kismine. "Think of the millions and millions of people in the world, laborers and all, who get along with only two maids."

One afternoon late in August a chance remark of Kismine's changed the face of the entire situation and threw John in a state of utter terror.

They were in their favorite grove as usual, and between kisses John was indulging in some romantic forebodings which he fancied added poignancy to their relations.

"Sometimes I think we'll never marry," he said sadly. "You're too wealthy, too magnificent. No one as rich as you are can be like other girls.

I should marry the daughter of some well-to-do wholesale hardware man from Omaha or Sioux City and be content with her half-million."

"I knew the daughter of a wholesale hardware man once," remarked Kismine. "I don't think you'd have been contented with her. She was a friend of my sister's. She visited here."

"Oh, then you've had other guests?" exclaimed John in surprise.

Kismine started and seemed to regret her words.

"Oh, yes," she said hurriedly, "we have had a few."

"But aren't you—wasn't your father afraid they'd talk outside?"

"Oh, to some extent, to some extent," she answered. "Let's talk about something pleasanter."

But John's curiosity was aroused.

"Something pleasanter!" he demanded. "What's unpleasant about that? Weren't they nice girls?"

To his great surprise Kismine began to weep.

"Yes—th—that's the—the whole t-trouble. I grew qu-quite attached to some of them. So did Jasmine, but she kept inv-viting them anyway. I couldn't understand it."

A dark suspicion was born in John's heart.

"Do you mean that they *told*, and your father had them—removed?"

"Worse than that," she muttered brokenly. "Father took no chances—and Jasmine kept writing them to come, and they had *such* a good time!"

She was overcome by a paroxysm of grief.

Stunned with the horror of this revelation John sat there open-mouthed feeling the nerves of his body twitter like so many sparrows perched upon his spinal column.

"What?" he exclaimed.

"Now, I've told you, and I shouldn't have," she said, calming suddenly and drying her dark blue eyes.

"Do you mean to say that your father had them *murdered* before they left?"

She nodded.

"In August usually—or early in

September. It's only natural for us to get all the pleasure out of them that we can first."

"Now abominable! How—why, I must be going crazy! Did you really admit that—"

"I did," interrupted Kismine, shrugging her shoulders. "We can't very well imprison them like those aviators, where they'd be a continual reproach to us every day. And it's always been made easier for Jasmine and me, because father had it done sooner than we expected. In that way we avoided any farewell scene—"

"So you murdered them! Uh!" cried John.

"It was done very nicely. They were drugged while they were asleep—and their families were always told that they died of scarlet fever in Butte."

"But—I fail to understand why you kept on inviting them!"

"I didn't," burst out Kismine. "I never invited one. Jasmine did. And they always had a very good time. She'd give them the nicest presents toward the last. I shall probably have visitors too—I'll harden up to it. We can't let such an inevitable thing as death stand in the way of enjoying life while we have it. Think how lonesome it'd be out here if we never had *any* one. Why, father and mother have sacrificed some of their best friends just as we have."

"And so," asked John slowly and accusingly, "and so you were letting me make love to you and pretending to return it and talking about marriage, all the time knowing perfectly well that I'd never get out of here alive—"

"No," she protested passionately. "Not any more. I did at first. You were here. I couldn't help that and I thought your last days might as well be pleasant for both of us. But then I fell in love with you and—and I'm honestly sorry you're going to—going to be put away—though I'd rather you'd be put away than ever kiss another girl."

"Oh, you would, would you?" cried John ferociously.

"Much rather. Oh, why did I tell

you? I've probably spoiled your whole good time now, and we were really enjoying things when you didn't know it. I knew it would make things sort of depressing for you. Besides, I've always heard that a girl can have more fun with a man whom she knows she can never marry."

"Oh, she can, can she?" John's voice trembled with anger. "Well, I've heard about enough of this. If you haven't any more pride and decency than to have an affair with a fellow that you know isn't much better than a corpse, well, I'll say that I don't want to have any more to do with you!"

"You're not a corpse!" she protested in horror. "You're not a corpse! I won't have you saying that I kissed a corpse!"

"I said nothing of the sort!"

"You did! You said I kissed a corpse!"

"I didn't!"

Their voices had risen, but upon a sudden interruption they both subsided into immediate silence. Footsteps were coming along the path in their direction and a moment later the rose bushes were parted displaying Braddock Washington, whose intelligent eyes set in his good-looking vacuous face were peering in at them.

"Who kissed a corpse?" he demanded in obvious disapproval.

"Nobody," answered Kismine quickly. "We were just joking."

"What are you two doing here, anyhow?" he demanded gruffly. "Kismine, you ought to be—to be reading or playing golf with your sister. Go read! Go play golf! Don't let me find you here when I come back!"

Then he bowed at John and went up the path.

"See?" said Kismine crossly, when he was out of hearing. "You've spoiled it all. We can never meet any more. He won't let me meet you. He'd have you poisoned if he thought we were in love."

"We're not, any more!" cried John fiercely, "so he can set his mind at rest upon that. Moreover, don't fool your-

self that I'm going to stay around here. Inside of six hours I'll be over those mountains if I have to bite my way through them, and on my way East."

They had both got to their feet and at this remark Kismine came close to him and put her arm through his.

"I'm going, too."

"You must be crazy—"

"Of course I'm going," she interrupted impatiently.

"You most certainly are not. You—"

"Very well," she said quietly, "we'll catch up with father now and talk it over with him."

Defeated, John mustered a sickly smile.

"Very well, dearest," he agreed, with pale and unconvincing affection, "we'll go together."

His love for her returned and settled placidly on his heart. She was his—she would go with him to share his hardships and his dangers. He put his arms about her and kissed her fervent mouth. He must make the best of it—for after all she loved him and had done him no harm; she had saved him, in fact.

Discussing the matter they walked slowly back toward the chateau. They decided that since Braddock Washington had seen them together they had best depart the next night. Nevertheless, John's lips were unusually dry at dinner, and he nervously emptied a great spoonful of peacock soup into his left lung. He had to be carried into the turquoise music-room and pounded on the back by one of the under-butlers, which Percy considered a great joke.

## CHAPTER IX

LONG after midnight John felt his body give a nervous jerk, and he sat suddenly upright, staring into the veils of somnolence that draped the quiet room. Through the great squares of blue darkness that were his open windows he had heard a faint far-away sound that died upon a bed of wind before identifying itself upon his memory, clouded with uneasy dreams.

But the sharp noise that had succeeded it was nearer, was just outside the room—the click of a turned knob, a footstep, a whisper, he did not know; a hard lump gathered in the pit of his stomach and his whole body ached in the moment that he strained agonizingly to hear. Then one of the veils seemed to dissolve before his eyes and he saw a vague figure standing by the door, a figure only faintly limned and blocked in upon the darkness, mingled so with the folds of the drapery as to seem distorted, like a reflection seen in a dirty pane of glass.

With a sudden half involuntary movement of fright or resolution John pressed the button by his bedside and the next moment he was sitting in the green sunken bath of the adjoining room, waked into alertness by the shock of the cold water which half filled it.

He sprang out, and, his wet pajamas scattering a heavy trickle of water behind him, ran for the aquamarine door which he knew led out onto the ivory landing of the second floor. The door opened noiselessly. A single crimson lamp burning in a great dome above lit the magnificent sweep of the carved stairways with a poignant beauty. For a moment John hesitated, appalled by the silent splendor massed about him, seeming to envelop in its gigantic folds and contours the solitary drenched little figure shivering upon the ivory floor. Then almost simultaneously two things happened. The door of his own sitting-room swung open, precipitating three almost naked negroes into the hall—and, as John swayed in wild terror toward the stairway, another door slid back in the wall on the other side of the corridor and John saw Braddock Washington standing in the lighted lift, wearing a fur coat and a pair of riding boots which reached to his knees and displayed above the glow of his rose-colored pajamas.

On the instant the three negroes—John had never seen any of them before and it flashed through his mind that they must be the professional executioners—paused in their movement toward John and turned expectantly to the man in

the lift, who burst out with an imperious command.

"Get in here! All three of you! Quick as hell!"

Then, it seemed as though within the instant, three negroes darted into the cage, the oblong of light was blotted out as the lift door slid shut, and John was again alone in the hall. He slumped weakly down against an ivory stair.

It was apparent that something portentous had occurred, something which, for the moment at least, had postponed his own petty disaster. What was it? Had the negroes risen in revolt? Had the aviators forced aside the iron bars of the grating? Or had the men of Fish stumbled blindly through the hills and gazed with bleak, joyless eyes upon the gaudy valley? John did not know. He heard a faint whir of air as the lift whizzed up again, and then, a moment later, as it descended. It was probable that Percy was hurrying to his father's assistance, and it occurred to John that should this be so it was his opportunity to join Kismine and plan an immediate escape. He waited until the lift had been silent for several minutes and then, shivering a little with the night cool that whipped in through his wet pajamas, he returned to his room and dressed himself quickly. Then he mounted a long flight of stairs and turned down the corridor carpeted with Russian sable which led to Kismine's suite.

The door of her sitting-room was open and the lamps were lighted. Kismine, clad in a frail kimono of palest yellow, stood near the window of the room in a listening attitude, and as John entered almost noiselessly she started and turned toward him.

"Oh, it's you!" she whispered tensely, crossing the room toward him. "Did you hear them?"

"I heard your father's slaves in my—"

"No," she interrupted excitedly. "Aeroplanes!"

"Aeroplanes? Perhaps that was the sound that woke me."

"There're at least a dozen. I saw one

a few moments ago dead against the moon. The guard back by the cliff fired his rifle and that's what roused father. We're going to open on them right away."

"Are they here on purpose?"

"Yes—it's that Italian who got away—"

Simultaneously with her last word, a succession of sharp cracks tumbled in through the open window. Kismine uttered a little cry, took a penny with fumbling fingers from a box on her dresser, and ran to one of the electric lights. In an instant the entire house was in darkness—she had blown out the fuse.

"Come on!" she cried to him "we'll go up to the roof garden and watch it from there!"

Drawing a cape about her she took his hand and they found their way out the door. It was only a step to the tower lift, and as she pressed the button that shot them upward he put his arms around her in the darkness and kissed her mouth. The spirit of romance had seized upon John Unger at last. A minute later they had stepped out upon the star-white platform and were gazing eagerly at the scene before them. Above, under the misty moon, sliding in and out of the patches of grey cloud that eddied below it, floated a dozen dark-winged bodies in a constant circling motion. From here and there in the valley flashes of fire leaped toward them, followed by sharp detonations. Kismine clapped her hands with pleasure, which, a moment later, turned to dismay as the aeroplanes at some pre-arranged signal, began to release their bombs and the whole of the valley became a panorama of deep reverberate sound and lurid light.

Before long the aim of the attackers became concentrated upon the points where the anti-aircraft guns were situated, and although the latter responded vigorously, one of them was almost immediately reduced to giant cinder and lay smouldering in a park of rose bushes.

"Kismine," begged John, "you'll be



glad when I tell you that this attack came on the eve of my murder. If I hadn't heard that guard shoot off his gun back by the pass I should now be stone dead—"

"I can't hear you!" cried Kismine, intent on the scene before her. "You'll have to talk louder!"

"I simply said," shouted John, a little impatiently, "that we'd better get out before they begin to shell the chateau!"

"All right." She was leaning in entrenchment over the parapet of the tower.

Suddenly the whole portico of the negro quarters cracked asunder, a geyser of flame shot up from under the colonnades and great fragments of jagged marble were hurled as far as the borders of the lake.

"There go fifty thousand dollars' worth of slaves," cried Kismine, "at pre-war prices. So few Americans have any respect for property."

John renewed his efforts to compel her to leave. The aim of the aeroplanes was becoming deadlier minute by minute, and only two of the anti-aircraft guns were still in commission. It was obvious that the garrison, encircled with a ring of fire, could not hold out much longer.

"Come on!" cried John, pulling at Kismine's arm, "we've got to go. Do you realize that those aviators would kill you without question if they find you?"

"Very well," she consented reluctantly, "perhaps we'd better."

"We'll have to wake Jasmine!" she said, as they hurried toward the lift. Then she added in a sort of childish delight, "We'll be poor, won't we? Like people in books. And I'll be an orphan and utterly free. Free and poor! What fun!" She stopped and raised her lips to him in a delighted kiss.

"It's impossible to be both together," said John grimly. "People have found that out. And I should choose to be free as preferable of the two. As an extra caution you'd better dump the contents of your jewel box into your pockets."

Ten minutes later the two girls met

John in the dark corridor and they descended to the main floor of the chateau. Passing for the last time through the carved and jeweled magnificence of the splendid halls, they stood for a moment out on the terrace, watching the burning negro quarters and the flaming embers of two planes which had fallen on the other side of the lake. A solitary gun was still keeping up a sturdy popping, and the attackers seemed timorous about descending lower, but sent their thunderous fireworks in a circle around it until it seemed that any chance shot might annihilate its Nubian crew.

John and the two sisters passed down the marble steps, he sedately and they sadly, turned sharply to the left and began to ascend a narrow path that wound like a garter about the diamond mountain. Kismine knew a heavily wooded spot half way up where they could lie concealed and yet be able to observe the wild night in the valley—finally to make an escape, when it should be necessary, along a secret path laid in a rocky gully.

## CHAPTER X

It was three o'clock when they attained their destination. The obliging and phlegmatic Jasmine fell off to sleep immediately, leaning against the trunk of a large tree, while John and Kismine sat, his arm around her, and watched the desperate ebb and flow of the dying battle among the ruins of a vista that had been a garden spot that morning. Shortly after four o'clock the last remaining gun gave out a clanging sound and went out of action in a swift tongue of red smoke, and though the moon was down, they could distinctly perceive that the flying bodies were circling closer to the earth. When the planes had made certain that the beleaguered possessed no further resources, they would land and the dark but glittering reign of the Washingtons would be over.

With the cessation of the firing the valley grew very quiet. The embers of the two aeroplanes glowed like the eyes



of some monster crouching in the grass. The chateau stood dark and silent, beautiful without light as it had been beautiful in the sun, while the woody rattles of Nemesis filled the air above with a growing and receding complaint. Then John perceived that Kismine, like her sister, had fallen sound asleep.

It was long after four when he became aware of footsteps along the path they had lately followed, and he waited in breathless silence until the persons they belonged to had passed the vantage point he occupied. There was a faint stir in the air now that was not of human origin, and the dew was cold; he knew that the dawn would break soon. Yielding to an instinct of curiosity, John waited until the steps had gone a safe distance up the mountain and were inaudible. Then he followed. About half way to the steep summit the trees fell away and a hard saddle of rock spread itself over the diamond beneath. Just before he reached this point he slowed down his pace, warned by an animal sense that there was life just ahead of him. He progressed cautiously, and coming to a high boulder lifted his head gradually above its edge. His curiosity was rewarded; this is what he saw:

Braddock Washington was standing there motionless, silhouetted against the grey sky without sound or sign of life. As the dawn came up out of the east, lending a cold green color to the earth, it brought the solitary figure into insignificant contrast with the new day.

While John watched, his host remained for a few moments absorbed in some inscrutable contemplation; then he signaled to the two negroes who crouched at his feet to lift the burden which lay between them. As they struggled upright, the first yellow beam of the sun struck through the innumerable prisms of an immense and exquisitely chiseled diamond—and a white radiance was kindled that glowed upon the air like a fragment of the morning star. The bearers staggered beneath its weight for a moment—then their rippling muscles caught and hardened

under the wet shine of the skins and the three figures were again motionless in their defiant impotency before the heavens.

After a while the white man lifted his head and slowly raised his arms in a gesture of attention as one who would call a great crowd to hear—but there was no crowd, only the vast silence of the mountain and the sky, broken by faint bird voices stirring down among the trees. The figure on the saddle of rock began to speak in nervous yet ponderous gravity with which was mingled an inextinguishable pride.

"You out there—" he cried in a trembling voice. "You—there—!" He paused, his arms still uplifted, his head held attentively as though he were expecting an answer. John strained his eyes to see whether there might be men coming down the mountain, but the mountain was bare of human life. There was only sky and mocking flute of wind along the tree tops. Could Washington be praying? For a moment John wondered. Then the illusion passed—there was something in the man's whole attitude antithetical to prayer.

"O, you above there!"

The voice was become strong and confident. This was no forlorn supplication. If anything, there was in it a quality of monstrous condescension.

"You there—"

Words, too quickly uttered to be understood, flowing one into the other. . . . John listened breathlessly, catching a phrase here and there, while the voice broke off, resumed, broke off again—now strong and argumentative, now colored with a slow, puzzled impatience. Then a conviction commenced to dawn on the single listener, and as realization crept over him a spray of quick blood rushed through his arteries. Braddock Washington was offering a bribe to God!

That was it—there was no doubt. The diamond in the arms of his slaves was some advance sample, a promise of more to follow.

That, John perceived after a time, was the thread running through his

sentences. Prometheus Enriched was calling to witness forgotten sacrifices, forgotten rituals, prayers obsolete before the birth of Christ. For a while his discourse took the form of reminding God of this gift or that which Divinity had deigned to accept from men—great churches if he would rescue cities from the plague, gifts of myrrh, incense and gold, of human lives and beautiful women and captive armies, of children and queens, of beasts of the forest and field, sheep and goats, harvests and cities, whole conquered lands that had been offered up in lust or blood for His appeal, buying a meed's worth of alleviation from the Divine wrath—and now he, Braddock Washington, Emperor of Diamonds, king and priest of the age of gold, arbiter of splendor and luxury, would offer up a treasure such as princes before him had never dreamed of, offering it up not in supplication, but in pride.

He would give to God, he continued, getting down to specifications, the greatest diamond in the world. This diamond would be cut with many more thousand facets than there were leaves on a tree, and yet the whole diamond would be shaped with the perfection of a stone no bigger than a fly. Many men would work upon it for many years. It would be set in a great dome of beaten gold, wonderfully carved and equipped with gates of opal and crusted sapphire. In the middle would be hollowed out a chapel presided over by an altar of iridescent, decomposing, ever-changing radium which would burn out the eyes of any worshipper who ever lifted up his head from prayer—and on this altar raised in its pristine depths there would be slain for the amusement of the Divine Benefactor any victim He should choose, even though it should be the greatest and most powerful man alive.

In return he asked only a simple thing, a thing that for God would be absurdly easy—only that matters should be as they were yesterday at this hour and that they should so remain. So very simple! Let but the heavens open,

swallowing these men and their aeroplanes—and then close again. Let him have his slaves once more, restored to life and well.

There was no one else with whom he had ever needed to treat or bargain.

He doubted only whether he had made his bribe big enough. God had His price, of course. God was made in man's image, so it had been said; He must have His price. And the price would be rare—no cathedral whose building consumed many years, no pyramid constructed by ten thousand workmen would be like this cathedral, this pyramid.

He paused here. That was his proposition. Everything would be up to specifications and there was nothing vulgar in his assertion that it would be cheap at the price. He implied that Providence could take it or leave it.

As he approached the end his sentences became broken, became short and uncertain, and his body seemed tense, seemed strained to catch the slightest pressure or whisper of life in the spaces around him. His hair had turned gradually white as he talked and now he lifted his head high to the heavens like a prophet of old — magnificently mad.

Then, as John stared in giddy fascination, it seemed to him that a curious phenomenon took place somewhere around him. It was as though the sky had darkened for an instant, as though there had been a sudden murmur in a gust of wind, a sound of far-away trumpets, a sighing like the rustle of a great silken robe—for a time the whole of nature round about partook of this darkness; the birds' song ceased; the trees were still, and far over the mountain there was a mutter of dull, menacing thunder.

That was all. The wind died along the tall grasses of the valley. The dawn and the day resumed their place in a time, and the risen sun sent hot waves of yellow mist that made its path bright before it. The leaves laughed in the sun and their laughter shook the trees until each bough was like a girl's school

in fairyland. God had refused to accept the bribe.

For another moment John watched the triumph of the day. Then, turning, he saw a flutter of brown down by the lake, then another flutter, then another, like the dance of great golden angels alighting from the clouds. The aeroplane fleet had come to earth.

John slid off the boulder and ran down the side of the mountain to the clump of trees where the two girls were awake and waiting for him. Kismine sprang to her feet, the jewels in her pockets jingling, a question on her breathless parted lips, but instinct told John that there was no time for words, they must get off the mountain without losing a moment. He seized a hand of each, and in silence they threaded the tree trunks, washed with light now and with the rising mist. Behind them from the diamond mountain and from the valley at its foot came no sound at all except the complaint of the peacocks far away and the pleasant undertone of morning.

When they had gone about half a mile, they avoided the park land and entered a narrow path that led over the next rise of ground. At the highest point of this John paused and turned around to see. The six eyes of the fugitives focused like one upon the mountain side they had just left—oppressed by some dark sense of tragic impendency.

Clear against the sky a broken white-haired man was slowly descending the steep slope, followed by two gigantic and emotionless negroes who carried a burden between them which still flashed and glittered in the sun. Half way down two other figures joined them—John could see that they were Mrs. Washington and her son, upon whose arm she leaned. The aviators had clambered from their machines to the sweeping lawn in front of the chateau, and with rifles in hand were starting up the diamond mountain in skirmishing formation.

But the little group of five which had

formed farther up and was engrossing all the watchers' attention, had mounted upon a ledge of rock where the negroes stooped and pulled up what appeared to be a trap-door in the side of the mountain. Into this they all disappeared, the white-haired man first, then his wife and son, finally the two negroes, the glittering tips of whose jeweled head-dresses caught the sun for a moment before the trap-door descended and engulfed them all.

Kismine clutched John's arm.

"Oh," she cried wildly, "where are they going? What are they going to do?"

"It must be some underground way of escape—"

A little scream from the two girls interrupted his sentence.

"Don't you see?" sobbed Kismine hysterically. "The mountain is wired!"

Even as she spoke, John put up his hands to shield his sight. Before their eyes the whole surface of the mountain had changed suddenly to a dazzling burning yellow which showed up through the jacket of turf as light shows through a human hand. For a moment the intolerable glow continued, and then like an extinguished filament it disappeared, revealing a black waste from which blue smoke arose slowly, carrying off with it what remained of vegetation and of human flesh. Of the aviators there was left neither blood nor bone—they were consumed as completely as the five souls who had gone inside.

Simultaneously, and with an immense concussion, the chateau seemed to throw itself into the air, bursting into flaming fragments as it rose and then tumbling back upon itself in a smoking pile that lay projecting half into the water of the lake. There was no fire—what smoke there was drifted off mingling with the sunshine and for a few minutes longer a powdery dust of marble drifted from the great featureless pile that had once been the house of jewels. There was no more sound and the three people were alone in the valley.

## CHAPTER XI

At sunset John and his two companions reached the high cliff which had marked the boundaries of the Washingtons' dominion, and looking back they found the valley tranquil and lovely in the dusk. They sat down to finish the food that Jasmine had brought with her in a basket.

"There!" she said, as she spread the table-cloth and put the sandwiches in a neat pile upon it. "Don't they look tempting? I always think that food tastes better outdoors."

"With that remark," remarked Kismine, "Jasmine enters the middle class."

"Now," said John eagerly to Kismine, turn out your pocket and let's see what jewels you brought along. If you made a good selection we three ought to live comfortably all the rest of our lives."

Obediently Kismine put her hand in her pocket and tossed two handfuls of glittering stones before him.

"Not so bad," cried John, enthusiastically. "They aren't very big, but—Hello!" His expression changed as he held one of them up to the declining sun. "Why, these aren't diamonds! There's something the matter!"

"By golly!" exclaimed Kismine, with a startled look. "What an idiot I am!"

"Why, these are rhinestones!" cried John.

"I know." She broke into a laugh. "I opened the wrong drawer. They belonged on the dress of a girl who visited Jasmine. I got her to give them to me in exchange for diamonds. I'd never seen anything but precious stones before."

"And this is what you brought?"

"I'm afraid so." She fingered the brilliants wistfully. "I think I like these better. I'm a little—a little tired of diamonds."

"Very well," said John gloomily. "We'll have to live in Hades. And you will grow old telling incredulous women that you got the wrong drawer. Unfortunately your father's bank-books were consumed with him."

"Well, what's the matter with Hades?"

"If I come home with a wife at my age my father is just as liable as not to cut me off with a hot coal, as they say down there."

Jasmine spoke up.

"I love washing," she said quietly. "I have always washed my own handkerchiefs. I'll take in laundry and support you both."

"Do they have washwomen in Hades?" asked Kismine innocently.

"Of course," answered John. "It's just like anywhere else."

"I thought—perhaps it was too hot to wear any clothes."

John laughed.

"Just try it!" he suggested. "They'll run you out before you're half started."

"Will father be there?" she asked.

John turned to her in astonishment.

"Your father is dead," he replied somberly. "Why should he go to Hades? They have enough dead ones along the Mississippi already. You have it confused with another place that was abolished long ago."

After supper they folded up the table-cloth and spread their blankets for the night.

"What a dream it was," Kismine sighed, gazing up at the stars. "How strange it seems to be here with one dress and a penniless fiancé!"

"Under the stars," she repeated. "I never noticed the stars before. I always thought of them as great big diamonds that belonged to someone. Now they frighten me. They make me feel that it was all a dream, all my youth."

"It was a dream," said John quietly. "Everybody's youth is a dream, a form of chemical madness."

"How pleasant then to be insane!"

"So I'm told," said John gloomily. "I don't know any longer. At any rate let us love for awhile, for a year or so, you and me. That's a form of divine drunkenness that we can all try. There are only diamonds in the whole world, diamonds and perhaps the shabby gift of disillusion. Well, I have that last and

I will make the usual nothing of it." sin who first invented consciousness.  
 He shivered. "Turn up your coat collar, Let us lose it for a few hours."  
 little girl, the night's full of chill and So wrapping himself in his blanket,  
 you'll get pneumonia. His was a great he fell off to sleep.

(The End)



## Wanderer's Song

By R. Lynn Riggs

O, YOU who have never known freedom,  
 Pity the likes of me,  
 Who am as a leaf in a great storm  
 Blown over land and sea!

Who am as a wrinkled and sere leaf  
 Torn from a rotten limb  
 To fall, or to fly from the wooded hills  
 At the tempest's whim.

Sailors have certain beacons  
 To follow night and day,  
 And men of the soil are chained  
 Relentlessly for aye.

But I am a flitting stranger  
 To every alien corn,  
 Soothed at starlight and moonrise  
 And fevered with the morn.

And like a leaf in a great storm  
 I am blown over land and sea.  
 O, you who have never known freedom  
 Pity the likes of me!



A MAN never loses faith in women. He merely loses the women.





# A Practical Guide to an Average American City

*By Charles G. Shaw*

THE fastest trains to New York are the 11:05 A. M. and the 6:17 P. M.

The best bootlegger in town is John K—. His address is — South — Street. Mention Jim C—'s name. Has Scotch, rye and gin at reasonable bootlegging prices. Good stuff. Dan J— has some real beer. Address: — West — Street.

The best barber shop is G—'s. Tony, in the second chair, will be found to be an artist of no mean skill.

The place for oysters and shrimps is unquestionably H—'s Oyster Bar at W— and L— Streets. George —, the headwaiter, knows the whereabouts of some excellent Port.

Frank R— is the name of the stage-door man of the P—, the best musical-show theatre in town; \$2.00 will work wonders.

For an all-around good dinner, the B— is the best restaurant. It is run by Sid C—, who has some of the finest sherry on the market. Tell him

you are a friend of Mike G—. Address: V— and F— Streets.

The best hotel is the A—. Charlie W— is the name of the night clerk.

In the event of arrest, Tom K— is the fellow to get in touch with. He can fix anything. Phone number 223 P—. Give Joe R—'s name.

The best gambling joint is D—'s. Address: Corner of E— and M— Streets. Ted S— is the manager. His Clicquot '11 is supreme. Double zero removed on Saturday night.

Old Doc. M— is the fellow for a bad hangover. He will put you on your toes in a few hours.

The lobby of the S— Hotel, about five in the afternoon, offers as good possibilities as any in town.

J—'s Rathskeller has the best jazz band and no objection is raised in the matter of anything on the hip.

The coat-room lass at B—'s is singularly easy to gaze upon, and, while a good girl, is not a fanatic.

Saint M—'s is the best hospital in town.



THE trouble with the other man is that he doesn't steal your wife. He merely steals her affections.



# The Brass Rail

*By Edwin J. Heath*

EVERY house in the row was of red brick—each as much like the other as two bricks before being laid among the million or more needed to build these dwellings. For years we saw nothing but hard straight lines. Our marble steps were all white, every slab just like every other. How old the houses were we did not know, but to us they were symbols of antiquity. As I see them now, thirty years later, they seem to defy the years to come.

Little things seemed big to us children. The red walls on either side of us seemed to meet the blue of the sky, to taper above us as if to close us in forever. At either end of the street was a new world into which we could enter only with permission or in defiance of orders. Girls and boys down there had been pictured to us as beyond the pale. Their houses did not seem so high as ours. More blue sky seemed to be over them. Further down was a land more alluring, whence came wind, rain, sounds that pleased our ears like the approach of fire engines, and down there were terrors, too, for at night beyond our own street lights there was darkness, flecked only by lights weak beside our own near glare.

The families in our street came from far-off lands, some from Ireland, but most of them from Germany, some from other parts of the United States. Aside from any ethics we were taught, our first impulse was to love one another. Aside also from any hatreds that we were taught, to some extent we had an impulse to fight with one another. I mention

this impulse to fight as something that had no bearing upon prejudices that prevailed within our homes. Each home—in spite of the uniformity—the party wall that held the rafters, the very continuity of cornice and roof—was a castle as exclusive as that mentioned in the proverb, in some ways as forbidding as that of a baron on the Rhine.

Some of us were talkative and brought home much gossip from the street, telling without malice things that helped to make our elders hate one another more decisively, telling also things that amused them more than we imagined, things that made them look knowingly at one another and exchange mysterious words that were not in our vocabulary. Some of us listened within doors and talked outside, carried word from the castle to the world outside, acted as entertainers for our little gang. We would carry out comments that were not intended for circulation beyond the marble steps.

At the grocer's store on one corner and at the saloon on another corner gossip was exchanged. This gossip of the men over the bar and of the women in the acrid atmosphere of the grocery store before the day of package goods led to many complications.

Three liaison agencies—the children, the men and the women—began to focus attention upon one house. In this house lived a little girl, who was a part of our happy, jolly crowd. Her ribbons were just a little bigger and brighter than those that held hair away from ears of the other girls.

It may have been that her clothes were better. Her voice had a pleasant ring to it. She uttered the little nothings that made up our conversation with a shrill emphasis that usually set us all laughing. There was lightness and gaiety about her. The names of all the others fade away. Hers was spoken oftenest and cannot be forgotten. She was Marie.

More and more we talked of Marie to our elders. Her name was the one known up and down the block. Dinner table talk focused on her. Then came questions, pointed in a way we could not understand; questions which we could only answer by effort, by a falling back on imagination when memory was not sufficient. We were tempted into lying about Marie, about things she had said, about things she had done, about places she had mentioned, about her abundance of candy and ready money, her clothes, her jewelry and her gaiety. In her gaiety was found confirmation of all that other signs had indicated. It was intimated to us that it was not right for anybody to be so gay. This was back in the day when Victoria and Bismarck were much lithographed. I am sure I heard about the man of iron and the woman of sterling virtues at about the same time that it was pointed out as some merit in character to resemble the hardness of steel or iron and the coldness of silver or marble.

Some turned on Marie before others. We children were as much alike as the houses in our row. Thirty years after I cannot remember a

single one of them all but Marie. She must have been different.

From the saloon across the way the men brought back reports that they were sent to get. From the grocer's store the women got information too dreadful to be put in words. We knew that Marie was to be forever an outcast. The grocer stopped making deliveries there, but big glistening wagons of other grocers far off delivered orders. Servants were employed to keep the marble steps spotless. Awnings were hung from the windows. New curtains were put up. Then one day a man came there and worked tediously drilling a hole in the marble steps.

Then came the great shock. Fathers going to work early probably were first to see this. Mothers peeping from windows and from latticed doors soon found out.

The house had a brass rail leading up the steps! That was the end of whispering! Everybody now talked aloud. We little ones did not know what they said, except that this confirmed suspicions and Marie and women of her household were not what they should be. There must be something more than shunning.

. . . That night windows were broken and the brass rail was torn down.

Hot indignation brought the whole block together.

We missed Marie. We were told that it was wrong even to think of her. That made us think all the more. We were told to forget her, but I am sure no one who ever lived in the block ever did.



# Consequences

By Catharine Brody

I

THE two lawyers sat on the cot and examined their client with curiosity. They had been appointed to the case and it looked what it was—unprofitable, except perhaps for the attendant publicity. And as they frankly stared, they felt—with everyone who had seen or spoken to Anna Latham ever since she had been taken to the Tombs—that it would be hard to attach anything bizarre, sensational, or tragic to such a girl. She looked young but neither simple nor sweet and in no way appealing, and she seemed to be neither exactly intelligent nor downright stupid, and yet not quite matter-of-fact.

As she sat, a little forward in her chair, with her eyes on the lawyers' faces in a mixture of submission and surprise, it was curious to see how the cell took on the atmosphere of an eminently respectable boarding-house top floor back and the lawyers became two men callers with the girl only uncomfortable about receiving visitors in her bedroom. The big-chested Irish policeman had called her "sister" all the way to the Tombs. She wore her light brown hair in a fringe on her forehead and a neat puff over each ear and one in back. Her eyes were large and a foggy blue, her features even, and her face round and pale, but not unhealthy. She was short and plump.

Mr. Barstow smacked his lips slightly and began. He was a shrewd, hard, rising young lawyer—a nine to five o'clock man, rain or shine, every day in the year, and no nonsense about him in business hours.

"We have been assigned to your

case," he explained. "You understand that, don't you? When you were arrested and had no counsel the State appointed us to defend you, as it does in such instances. Now we want to get this matter clear. You say this was no accident—that you meant to do it. What was your reason?"

"I don't know," she said simply.

"Now don't be ashamed to tell us," put in Mr. Widelmaster, the other lawyer. The voice carried a pitying undertone. His face sagged under the chin with its superabundance of flesh. One felt that a finger poked into any part of his body would meet a resistless flood of flesh and would be engulfed by it. He was the partner in whom clients generally confided.

"Now tell us, don't be ashamed," he continued in a lower tone, while his breath came a little faster. "He tried to attack you, didn't he?"

"No, he didn't. I've said over and over again he didn't. He never harmed me at all. He was nice to me, in some ways. He never said or did anything to me that was wrong."

"If we are to do anything for you, we must get to the bottom of this," resumed Mr. Barstow with patience. "Let us see. Robbery couldn't have been the motive since all the money he had was found intact—nothing missing at all. Tell me, where is your home? Have you any people?"

"My father and mother live upstate. I don't want you to tell them."

"Now, my dear young lady, your parents are just the people to help you. Your mother—" broke in Mr. Widelmaster.

"No, they have enough trouble. I won't tell you about them."

"Why did you leave your home?"

"Well, it was so dull and there are such a lot of children. I couldn't stand it—taking care of the children and being nagged at all the time. I learned stenography myself out of a book and I had some money saved up doing odd jobs for people, so I thought I'd come here."

"Tell me how you lived here," coaxed Mr. Widelmater. "You were lonesome? You didn't like the city? You missed the country?"

"No, I hate the country. I wasn't lonesome. I love New York."

"What did you do evenings?"

"Well—I walked."

"Walked—where?"

"Oh, just walked. Down Fifth Avenue mostly, just looking at things—at the buildings."

"Well, I don't see what that has to do with it at all," broke in Mr. Barstow impatiently. "You haven't any friends here, you say?"

Mr. Widelmater waved his partner off with his hand.

"Now wait a minute," he said softly, "just wait a minute. There may be something in my hunch after all. Here's this girl—no friends, a furnished room, no amusement but walking the streets and looking at buildings. Then her employer, Ross, makes love to her—"

"He didn't, I tell you. He had nothing to do with me," interrupted the girl, and it was remarkable how much steady rage she could put into her voice. "He had nothing to do with it. I liked just going where I pleased and having nobody to bother me."

"Let me get at this," said Mr. Barstow with determination. "Tell me just how you got this position."

She tried to tell them.

She had some money when she came to the station and the city didn't frighten her. She asked a woman official of a society she had read about to direct her to a cheap rooming house. She left her bag in her room and strolled around looking at the tops of the buildings against the sky. She did nothing but

that at first. She hated the insides of the buildings, because they were shut in and stuffy. They closed around her—she repeated it with a shiver. But she loved the outsides and the streets because it was autumn and the wind blew her along. She liked the wind. She had liked it home, too, except that her mother called her in and grumbled at her always that she was gadding—and one couldn't walk about at night—the roads were dark.

She hadn't much money, so the second week she looked in the papers and wrote letters to places or went around—but nobody wanted her, because she was slow at dictation, she supposed. Anyhow, she couldn't get anything. Six weeks passed and she owed money on her room, and she hadn't had enough food for a long time—about a fortnight. Then she saw Mr. Ross' advertisement in the paper. She hadn't eaten at all the day before and she was very hungry the morning she went to see him. She had to wait till he came in, and the girl who was leaving confided that she had stayed only a month, that she couldn't stand him, because he was such a "fusser." But when he came, he was very nice to her and she broke down and told him she had had nothing to eat. So he hired her and gave her an advance on her salary.

"I don't see any sense in that," burst forth Mr. Widelmater. "We can't tell that to any jury. He was very kind and hired her because she was starving, and now she confesses she was responsible for his death, and she doesn't even say she's sorry! Now if he had only even tried to kiss her it would make a damn fine case. See here, sister. We're your lawyers and lawyers are like doctors. You don't have to be ashamed or afraid to confide in them. After he hired you, he sometimes hinted how grateful you ought to be to him?"

"No, no, no."

"Then why did you do it?"

"I don't know. I just wanted to get out. I was going to get out if I wanted to." Her voice rose to a knife point of determination.



"What do you mean, you were going to get out if you wanted to?" Mr. Widelmater caught her up.

She shut her lips and wouldn't answer.

"Come," coaxed Mr. Barstow. "Tell us just what led up to it, and just what happened on that last day, everything, as you remember it."

She tried to tell them, groping her way among the unexpressed, the inexpressible, struggling to define the indefinable, reaching out to confine momentary moods, minute impressions that came and slipped away, just beyond grasp, and peered at her like wordless, mocking Pucks.

## II

HER existence on the outskirts of a tiny village in the Adirondacks had been planless, land-to-mouth:—when one wanted meat one killed a pig, or shot a deer in or out of season. When one needed fish, one went to the lake and fished; vegetables grew in the back garden. Her father's services as guide provided them with the small amount of money that had to suffice.

Coming from that easy environment, were one went slothfully about one's work, stopping to chatter with a passer-by or to attend to the antics of a bird, or to watch the cat sunning herself, or at dusk to observe the sun weaving himself a fittingly colored drop curtain for his exit, she was used to a time as infinite as space. She had never marked off a certain hour for rising, a certain hour for getting somewhere, a certain hour for returning. Mr. Ross warned her that he expected punctuality—"promptness in his stenographers"—those were his words, implying that its excellent application denoted certain limits. He always got to his office at eight-thirty. He would not expect her before nine sharp. The "sharp" made her nervous and apprehensive, but he had been so kind that she determined never to fail.

She had no watch, so she woke at intervals during that first night to see if it were still dawn. And at the first faint

breath of dawn she rose and threw on her clothes and walked the streets till she found a clock. It was six. She had some breakfast and walked a bit more, staring at the city—a city of close and haggard buildings, waiting for the sun to transform them, like the lined gray faces of women who rise after a sleepless night before they have applied their make-up. Then she climbed up to her room and for a full hour she sat stolidly and waited before she walked to the office. She got in very early and Mr. Ross was pleased. All through the autumn she did this. She loved those hours of wandering at will in a locked-in city. She could weave a magic carpet of freedom from them to spread over the dull days.

But when winter came, one slipped out of bed by degrees—first a hand, then a foot, then the final lift of the entire body. Often it rained and one couldn't walk. And later it was so cold that one could only lie in bed and try to creep into the very soul of warmth in the last quarter of an hour before the alarm rang. Then one gave oneself five minutes, then ten minutes, then another five, then just a second longer. Then one knew one would be late perhaps. One washed shrinkingly—stepped into one's clothing, tearing, pinning, skipping clasps at random, omitted breakfast, and devoured city blocks with one's feet, while the mind anticipated the minutes. One got there with foreboding. Mr. Ross looked at his watch. Five minutes past nine. He remarked: "It's five minutes past nine," not as if he wanted to say it exactly, but as if some hidden force in his nature dragged it out of him. It made it worse. Such a little thing!

She couldn't answer, of course. There was no excuse and she had not words enough to make one if there had been. The door shut behind her and the room reached out to close about her.

A screen at one corner shut off Mr. Ross. He was the New York selling agent for a group of out-of-town small factories. He was an oldish man with a square, sunken-cheeked face, loose

skin under his chin, slack, peevish lips, grayish hair. He dressed with the utmost spruceness, he walked with a consciously spruce air, and yet one always expected to see fluid dribbling from the corner of the weak lips, following the line that slanted from mouth to chin and so on down to his immaculate waistcoat. He sucked in his breath at intervals. He laid this to either his digestion or his heart, she had forgotten which. He jumped about incessantly. His feet twitched regularly like a clock; his hand shook. He jerked out in a series of short, hurried steps to get a drink of water, he jerked his arm out—didn't pull it out in one large moment, but in a series of infinitesimal motions as if the arm were all tiny joints. He was always hopping from back of the screen, peeking around, hopping back. He ascribed this to his nervousness, making of nervousness a super-quality indigenous to the elect and with which inferiors had no business to be inflicted.

Her desk was set against the window, just outside the screen in such a way that Mr. Ross could, by turning around and craning his neck a little way, get a glimpse of her, but she could not see him. The arrangement was unintentional, but it gave her an apprehensive feeling. Before her stood her typewriter and desk, beyond her the door, at one side the screen, in another corner, the filing case and a small water tank with a box of paper cups. Mr. Ross had warned her against wasting stationery and cups. Must be economical, he said. Times were hard.

She would not have dared to disobey. She was afraid, very much afraid, that she would be too slow, too dull, too inaccurate, not quite what was expected of all these alert, unknown, trim young beings who stepped straight on—on—in the streets, in the buildings, in the elevators—making way for no one. She felt as if they might even walk through her, if she did not get out of their path in time. She always rambled up to them, and they stepped almost onto her before she could stumble out of their way, perhaps to jolt confusedly into someone

else. She was terribly afraid and anything she could save seemed so inadequate to stuff into the cavernous mouth that would confront her at Mr. Ross' will.

The days went very slowly and they were all the same. When there was one continuous thing to do all day, she rather liked it. Typing, for instance—typing a voluminous sales report (Mr. Ross' sales reports were always voluminous) or form letters. She preferred form letters. Then your arms worked up and down, up and down, one monotonous motion succeeding another. The arms became like feet. Typing was like walking—word by word instead of step by step. She often wondered idly, while her brain was mesmerized by the hypnotic motion of her arms, if you put one word in front of another, one word in front of another, and so on, and so on, just how much space the line of them would consume on a city block.

These were the good days, when Mr. Ross went out to see people. He left her form letters to type and then she sat typing steadily and quite happily all day long while her mind strolled unrestrained in faraway places. It sighed with winds and it danced all alone on stages—her mind, and sometimes she could turn and rest her hands on her lap, not because she was tired but quite unaccountably, and let her eyes wander away among the tops of the buildings. Around her and below her they were planted, with the sky over them on misty days like a huge inverted gray water-pot, sending out faint trickles of sunshine.

These were the good days, but the bad days came oftener. On these, Mr. Ross had already been opening the mail, unfolding it, putting it in just that particular corner of his desk, lighting a cigar, letting it die out, chewing it, relighting it, jerking out to get a drink of water, jerking back, opening the window, closing it—in short, doing what he called "keeping busy" for at least half an hour. As the door closed behind her, he could not help stealing a glance at his watch. She waited in apprehension for what would come first. Sometimes he said,

"M-m-m, nine fifteen." Then she mumbled "I'm sorry," and threw off her coat and hat, thrust them on the clothes rack, grabbed her book and sat ready with pencil poised. A dull gray haze wound itself around the room, over her mind, over her sight, over the keen air and the bright sun outside. Existence narrowed to a constricted room, with a pencil, a notebook and a voice. Then began for her the supreme torture of the day.

She had never known there could be so many words in the world. Dozens of "ands," scores of "ises," "wases," "hases," hundreds of "I's," companies of "I am in receipt," legions of "as a matter of facts," battalions of "I remain, yours very trulys." Hard, drab, hackneyed words, stuffy words that smelled of long usage like unaired bed-clothes—dragged out one after another in Mr. Ross' toneless voice out of the shapeless, flabby mouth of an old man. After a while, the voice rose to a note of importance, a triumphant importance, which inarticulately, unconsciously, she resented with the whole force of her spirit. It was a voice which proclaimed its right to translate itself into words, to force its words into her ears, to force her hands to obey them. A band of words, to her meaningless, worthless, pressed close upon her heels, and as soon as she had disposed of one, on came another, then another, unceasing, with that monotonous voice droning them on and on into her ears, till she was ready to face them regardless and fight them off, to scream in uncomprehended revolt. Then they stopped. Mr. Ross left her. She was alone and for the moment at peace.

But whenever he spoke to her in his habitual short fashion, snapping out a command, a question, a wish, she thrilled with instinctive rebellion. She did not question why. She just longed to refuse to get him that number, to make no response to his query, not to pass him the book he wanted, not to fill the inkwell, to defy his injunction to file a certain letter right away.

She watched the minutes drag themselves away as slowly as a blind person

feeling his path around a room. The half hour before twelve was the worst. But the moment she stepped into the streets, wet, bright, or gray, it did not matter, all her tautened nerves relaxed; she felt a delightful coolness and sanity, as if she had just sweated out of a fever. She hurried through her lunch, and then, free and happy, she roamed up and down the side streets, gazing into the shop windows, staring into the blue sky that stood so aloof from the sharp angles of the buildings silhouetted against it. And on her return, with the closing of the office door, the same inexpressible wave of revolt carried her off into a state of lip-locked defiance.

Mr. Ross never sat still. He was too industrious. When his business letters and calls had been disposed of, he dictated letters to the papers. He called this "doing his duty as a citizen." When letters to the papers had been disposed of, he rearranged the supply closet, placing each pile of papers and samples in exactly the opposite position to where it had lain before. He called this "keeping things in order." When the supply closet had been rearranged, he made her check up all the bills for office supplies with him. He called this "keeping track of expenses." He considered it incumbent on him to train her. No semicolon was too small, no comma too inconspicuous to be called to her attention and readjusted. She stepped about the office with the fear of slight hairs of tiny Damoclean swords being cut above her every minute by Mr. Ross' voice.

Whenever she thought of leaving, the spectre of her early experience with the city rose before her and she shuddered away. Whenever she thought of going home, the image of the untended, shed-like house, cluttered with unwashed children, rose before her and hardened her will.

So she stayed on. Spring came and she resented it fiercely. Spring melted the barriers of ice and snow and harsh weather with which the city guarded its heart in the winter. Even the hard roofs of the buildings were merged in the softened ether of spring skies.

Mornings, she heard the office door close behind her with an almost physical nausea. Sometimes after a rain the city had a fattened languor that tempted one to an unattainable ease, at other times a crisp buoyancy, luring one to an unattainable abandon.

It was then that she decided to go home. The spurt of daring which had enabled her to rush into unknown dangers was far removed from that steady courage which enables one to face obstacles duly surveyed and placarded. She knew no one in the city to whom she could go for help. She had no confidence, no ability, no special desire except for a peaceful, unsupervised performance of routine tasks, a sort of active inertia, that as far as she could see was impossible in the city. She did not blame the city. It was simply an impartial observer of human struggles, as aloof as its buildings—a huge Frankenstein monster made of earth and yet with an unearthly beauty, that now felt secure enough in itself to repudiate the puny strength which had created it.

### III

BUT spring had come. All the inhabitants of the rooming house in the shabby upper Thirties where she lived left their doors open, so that the composite smell of the strips of red carpet and the yellow-stained paper, and the dingy windows and the layers of dust in their rooms should be dissipated.

On a Sunday night, as she unlocked the door, her neighbor on the top floor, a man of whom she had had infrequent glimpses throughout the winter, came out of his room and grinned at her and asked her for a match. He had been sitting in the dark, it appeared, for lack of one. She stood and watched as the tiny yellow light twisted itself over his face—a narrow face with a rather childish chin and a childish flush on the cheekbones, and a tuft of curly black hair on a very high forehead. The match went out. "Another one, please." There was a grin in his voice which broke it half into a boyish treble, half

into a mature huskiness. She laughed and handed him her last match. This time the gas jet soared into life with a shriek. Then with an old theatre program he made a burning brand, which he carried into her room and thus lit her gas. It burnt his fingers and added a sickening smell of scorched paper to the many prevailing odors, but it was fun.

There is an old-fashioned game called "Consequences," wherein the most commonplace beginnings may lead to the most irrelevant conclusions. Their acquaintance thus begun was easily fostered. They met on the landings and stopped to chat, until it became the custom for her to tap on his door when she entered from her day's work. Often she sat on his bed and listened to his talk while he adjusted his tie or put the finishing touches to his toilette. She thought nothing of this because she was so overconscious of her limitations in the way of attractiveness that she maintained a profoundly matter-of-fact attitude with men.

Besides, this happened to be the only time of day when they could see each other, for she found that the boy, Ned—his last name she would not divulge—was a chorus man in a very popular musical comedy. At six o'clock he would be hurrying out to his dinner. He rarely came back before one, and in the early morning, when she rose, he was of course still asleep.

He turned out to be gay and easy and surprisingly ingenuous beneath a certain direct coarseness of phrase which she did not mind because she did not probe.

From the first her attitude toward him paralleled that of the first night when she had laughed and given him her last match. He ran out of them often and went to her. When she bought candy or crackers to munch in the solitude of Sunday, he helped himself liberally with a kind of good-humored thoughtlessness, and then with a "So long, buddy," dashed off on his own affairs, leaving her to her dismal room. He never stayed in on Sundays; sometimes he never appeared at all that day.

He intimated that he had many friends with whom he wanted to "keep in touch," and once he remarked that "Sunday was the only day he could call his own in this dog's life."

Further than that, his time, his friends, his affairs were a fascinating mystery to her. Not that he did not gossip. He told her tales of the company, of the stage, with such a humorous mockery that their sordidness hardly seemed real. He gilded everything from an inexhaustible store of sunniness, and it had the same result as the lighting effect of a theatre.

What drab components it really concealed, or whether it concealed anything at all, she could not tell. He never gave rock-bottom confidence such as she could not help wanting him to know about herself, about his age, his parents, his home, and when she was impelled to impart something of her struggles against the office, the city, her slovenly family, he murmured, "Too bad. Tough life," and shed them as rapidly as a duck sheds water. She thought he was too poor to take her along with him to dinner, even when, as often happened, they went their separate ways at the same time. Though she would gladly have paid her own way, an ingrown reticence prevented her from making the least concession to her wish, to give him the least hint of desire, and he met her on the same level of companionable indifference. He just gilded her lightly in passing, because it cost no trouble and then went on with his own carefree existence.

And really she asked for nothing more. She was too humble. So long as he did not talk of any other girl, she could imagine that he belonged to her. Knowing nothing of the reality, she could very well manage to subsist on a shadow. Thus, the shadow of an emotion, he strolled beside her, his body always hanging a little lazily behind his feet on her evening rambles around the city; with her he saw the buildings around the dark depression of the park, standing up very tall and of an unbending loveliness, like matrons at

some very formal reception, with their thousand lighted windows glittering on their bosoms, like a thousand yellow jewels; with her, he crinkled his ambiguous, greenish eyes at the wonders of the shop windows; in the restaurants, she filled in the skeletons of past conversations with things which he had never said, and things which she never intended to say.

To go home now would have been like deliberately forsaking a sunny path on a March day. It was hard to do that even when the sunny path seemed to lead nowhere. She loitered on. The days were long, lethargic wastes across which, like one of those mules that refuse to conform to men's ideas of life and work, she was only driven by Mr. Ross' constant goading. To the sunny spot on the top floor she came home to warm her chilled imagination at the end of the day. Not one evening did she neglect to rap on his door and to be gladdened by his hearty, "Come on in, buddy." After a quarter of an hour, he flitted blithely away and she went into her own room and stared at her face in the glass for a long time before she descended to her solitary dinner. This might have gone on forever, for all she expected. Why not? Everything in her life had gone on forever—interminable days at home, interminable days in the city.

#### IV

ONE Sunday night, Ned came in earlier than usual and stopped to "dig into her grub," as he jocosely phrased it. Then, with his mouth full of chocolate creams, he told her that his show would go on the road next week.

"You, too?" One could see her heart sinking in her eyes. She did not trouble to disguise it. Besides, it must have been apparent to him long ago that she was "sweet on him," as he would put it. He took untroubled advantage of it, as of anything that was easy to hand.

"Uh, huh. Hate to leave Broadway." He helped himself to some crackers, then with a sort of faint compunction,



much as one would stoop to pat the head of a dog that looked up with big eyes, he added, "And you too, buddy."

At once he felt the sentimental advantage it might give her and veered back to the commonplace.

"Tell you what," he said. "I'm going Friday. Let's eat in today, sort of farewell dinner."

"Oh, yes!" It took her breath away.

"All right," he dashed into his room for his hat. "Tell you what," he called. "You get the sandwiches, and I'll get the coffee."

Of course she bought more than sandwiches; she ransacked the delicatessen store and returned heavily laden with bundles. He had brought a carton full of coffee and a package of cigarettes for himself.

They made a spread on two chairs and an old newspaper in her room. They curled up on the bed and laughed and ate.

Over the coffee, she chattered endlessly, while he smoked a cigarette. She wanted to stretch the thin thread of her happiness as far as it would go. She described Mr. Ross. She elaborated on Mr. Ross. She told him one afternoon when she had been reading a magazine during a breathing spell, he had purposely spilled three boxes of different colored and different sized carbon paper so that she would be kept busy sorting them even for a few minutes. She told him how Mr. Ross had written a two-page letter to the Postmaster General about a package on which he had had to pay two cents excess postage; how postal authorities flowed down in solemn procession, weighed it and reweighed it, how finally two bright copper pennies were returned to Mr. Ross by special delegate; how Mr. Ross had inadvertently shoved them off his desk, and they had rolled behind it; how she had been ordered to look for them "as a souvenir" and how she had secretly pushed them down a crack and then watched with delighted eyes while Mr. Ross peered this way and that behind his desk to find them.

He howled at this, slanting back his

thin face with the pointed, foreshortened chin. He laughed warmly in his throat, and his greenish eyes crinkled with mirth, and a wave of healthy, boyish color rose and glowed on his cheeks. At that moment, she loved him thoroughly, deliciously, with sadness and in silence. It was perhaps the happiest moment of her life. With a glimmer of pity, he mused,

"That's rotten. Rotten life for a girl. Why don't you try something else?"

She shook her head dolefully, "What?"

He couldn't think what, only the flicker of pity had not quite gone out, so he said carelessly:

"Why don't you try the stage? You're nice and plump. Make a good pony."

"Me? The stage? Oh, do you think I could?"

The world of yearning in her eyes and words rather startled him and he had an instinct of self-defense to wriggle out of it, but his easy humor restrained him. He stuffed his mouth with more chocolate creams and said that they were taking on some new ponies for the road, and she might do, "no reason why she shouldn't." He promised readily that, if she could get Monday afternoon off, he'd take her around to the manager.

She could not sleep that night for the glamor which surrounded her. You would as soon have thought of sleeping on a sunny afternoon. She didn't know what excuse to give Mr. Ross. She only knew she would get off. In the morning, she faced him with nonchalance and smooth words rolled off her tongue. Her mother was very ill. She had a telegram. She must catch an afternoon train. Wouldn't he be so kind as to—just this once? Mr. Ross grumbled. He harried her with questions. He fumed. He supposed she couldn't get back before Wednesday. "Lots of work—too bad—well, of course—take the train, very annoying, very, very annoying."

That afternoon she was free—free for a day and a half.

## V

Was there ever before such a spring afternoon? A sky muffled in cloudy white, like a girl at her first communion, a breeze like a teasing smile on the face of the heavens, a city absorbed in and absorbing sunshine.

"So you did get off? That's good," said Ned with a shade of annoyance, as he met her at the house; "well, come along."

He took her arm with indifferent ease and walked her briskly along. He was not quite so sunny outdoors as in the dull room on the dark top floor. She did look a little countrified with that cheap black plush collar on her old coat. He hoped none of his friends would see him. As for her, she thought that it was the first time they had walked together.

He took her to an anteroom in the offices of the company, where she found groups of men and girls talking together. They greeted him, "Lo, Ned." "Hello, old top," and depositing her against a wall with instructions to wait, he turned to his own circle. They giggled, chattered, she could hear his throaty laugh. Girls patted his arm, leaned against it, made affectionate eyes at him. He was well liked. They looked at her with incurious eyes, judging her neither for better nor for worse, and moved their eyes away. But she was relieved to find that with a few exceptions the rank and file of the chorus were conspicuous not so much for beauty as for an obvious effort at beauty. After a while, a middle-aged man whom they called "Blikey" ran out of an inner office and as they gathered about him, made some inaudible announcement. She saw Ned talk to him in an undertone. The man glanced at her, glanced away, answered in some fashion, shrugged and walked into the inner office.

Ned dashed over to her with his usual wide smile:

"Blikey says lots of the girls are quitting. He says he'll have to train some new ponies for the road, and he'd

just as soon have you as anybody else. Tell you what, I'll see you tonight. I have to be off now. So long."

He gave her arm a good-humored little squeeze, sang out to a dispersing group, and disappeared with them out of the door.

The sky had turned a still gray, as if it had burnt out all the radiance of its youth in one afternoon and settled to a wearied middle age, when she walked back to her room. She went alone, small and stolid, and patient as a peasant to sit and wait till Ned should return. At the first bound of his steps on the stairs she met him in the hall with the question in her eyes.

"Hallo, how's the girl?" he called.

He sailed into his room and emerged in a minute with his coat off and a towel in his arms, singing at the top of that throaty voice of his with the grin in the middle. "You got any soap?" Without a word she handed him her lone cake of soap, touching his long, cool, brown fingers.

He smiled down at her.

"I'll talk to Blikey again tomorrow," he said. "I'll bet he takes you. Gotta wash up."

The bathroom door shut on him and his singing mingled with the sound of running water. Softly she closed her door, and after a while, still singing, she heard him gallop down the stairs.

She did not see him at all on Tuesday. Each patter on the stairs, each sound of the front door opening or closing brought her to her feet and strained her ears. His door remained shut. He was asleep, absent, dead, for all she knew, and she dared not bring herself to knock. She was absolutely unbound, utterly free, to go, to stay, to sit alone in her room and dream; no duties to tug for performance; no Mr. Ross to goad her on inch by inch with a pointed stick of work.

After lunch she loitered along Fifth Avenue with listless feet, feeling strangely abandoned by the city. For a moment she had stopped adding even her tiny bit of motive power to the engine that supplied the Frankenstein

monster with energy, with life; therefore he turned away from her, he dropped her, he shrugged her from his scheme of things. And yet he could not forego his little revenge, for suddenly a face came out of the dozens that were all cut of one size and pattern for her and smote her full on the eyeballs. It caught and held her eyes in a moment when all her faculties stopped like a watch that has run out. Then instantly, she dropped her head and shrank and let the crowd encompass her like water. She ought to have known better than to walk on the streets at lunch time when she was supposed to be in the Adirondacks. Had Mr. Ross seen her? After all, it did not matter very much, and if he had, she could think up some excuse. What mattered was Ned. She sought her room like a harbor, like a harbor from which the fog has lifted, for his door was open.

"Hallo, buddy," he greeted her cheerily, "I got that little affair all fixed up for you. Blikey says you're to come around at three o'clock Friday and he'll give you the once over. We don't go till late, so you'll have plenty of time to pack your grip. Think you can get off again?"

She glowed. "Oh, I'll not go back at all."

He screwed his eyebrows into a small frown and swinging on his heels back and forth with his hands in his pockets, examined her.

"Say, don't do that," he said hurriedly. "You go back. Hold on to your job. You never can tell, you know."

He hung on the edge of a decision, swung away, faced her again, while his greenish eyes took on a pleading look and a faint spot of color rose high in each cheek.

"Say," he stammered, "could you—slip a fellow five bones? I'm dead broke. Haven't enough for dinner to-night, that's a fact. I'll be sure to give it to you Friday."

She took a bill out of her purse and gave it to him.

He stood fingering the bill and look-

ing at her intently. "You'll be sure and go back to the office, won't you?"

"Yes, if you want me to."

He disregarded this and turned away. A few minutes later, bright as ever, he sang out to her on his way down:

"Tell you what, you meet me here Friday at three and I'll take you over to Blikey."

Never had dull days been so hard to bear. So unnecessary they seemed too, because after Friday they would prove to have been a useless precaution. Mr. Ross' eyes gleamed at her out of the pasty folds of his face.

"How's the Adirondacks this time of year?" he asked with sarcasm. A reddish flush mingled with the sunken yellow of his cheeks and he compressed his lips bitterly.

"Oh, nice, very nice," she answered, and turned her head away, because a mean anger is not nice to look at.

That was all, but she knew he had seen her, and she did not care.

## VI

FRIDAY morning was like the dawn of one of those misleading new eras when nothing is to be carried over from the past, when everything lies in the future. She went about her morning's work with a calm insolence, deferring her demand, because of the absolute certainty of its fulfilment. She did not care much what bold or stupid thing she said. She knew she would meet Ned at three o'clock and that was all she cared to know. She went out for lunch and returned. Mr. Ross always left for his lunch at one sharp. He paid no attention to her. He had been morose all week. While he was out, she straightened the files and cleared her desk and looked to see that his inkwell was full and his pens good. If she were going in haste, she wanted to leave everything in order. After all, he had been kind to her in spite of his irritating mannerisms.

When he came in and passed behind the screen to take his place at the desk, she began, "Er—Mr. Ross—"

"Bring your book in, Miss Latham," he cut her short.

She pressed her lips together; a dozen times a day he had this effect on her. She went back of the screen and sat, facing him, her back to the window, her book open on her lap.

Mr. Ross bent over his papers with a stubborn pettishness, terribly irritating to her. His desk, a massive rolltop affair, set against the wall, was loaded with old papers, old bills, and a miscellany of extraneous matter, just like the pockets of a small boy. The space back of the screen, "his office," was a repository for discontinued "lines." The bookcase in the corner near the desk had been a sample of a "line" he had handled in more prosperous days. Back of his chair, against the shaky screen, stood a tall, narrow, sample showcase with a glass door, on a rickety table—both relics of the past. The showcase was empty and rattled whenever one jolted the table in passing through the narrow space between it and the back of Mr. Ross' chair.

She looked at all this for the last time, she hoped. As she watched Mr. Ross sitting in the swivel chair, with its stiff, businesslike back—that baggy figure, kept so desperately in trim, and so like an empty sack which retained the outlines of a load that had once filled it, she gave an involuntary long sigh of expected relief. He glared at her. She was disturbing his thoughts. He did not think stenographers should disturb the thoughts of their employers.

"Get me the dictionary, please," he said sharply, moving his chair in a little to give her room to pass.

She slid between the back of his chair and the empty showcase to get to the bookcase. Her body brushed the table slightly as it always did and the whole contraption quivered as usual, and Mr. Ross warned her as he always did, "Be careful of that case." He said this at least a dozen times a day but he would never think of moving the table and case and parting with them.

Tugging at the dictionary which lay

on the top shelf of the bookcase, she found her voice.

"I'd like to get off this afternoon," she said.

He made no answer, kept his head bent over his papers, oblivious of her. She put the dictionary down on the desk and still he would not look up. A sudden panic seized her. How was she to get out if he did not either assent or dissent? Still he could not stop her. She could always leave if it came to that.

"I—I have a bad tooth. Have to go and see a dentist," she stuttered to claim his attention. Suddenly she begged, "It'll be the last time, really."

He pushed his chair back and glanced up with that sort of mean triumph which teachers' faces sometimes take on when they show that they have absolute power of discipline over a pupil.

"Perhaps you think the Adirondacks air would do you good?" he said. "Bad tooth or no bad tooth, I cannot let you off this afternoon, Miss Latham. There is work to be done. You are paid to do it." Again he bent over his desk.

Icy with anger, her throat too knotted for speech, she turned to pass back of his chair, to get her hat and coat and go. She could leave—she could leave in a minute. He had forgotten that. He was not her jailer. He had pushed his chair out so that she would have to squeeze to get through. As she halted for a second, with her lips very tight, her eyes as staring as those of a person who is being choked to death, she thought she would like to take his chair and use all of her hard, young strength to push it and the sagging burden on it into the very vitals of the desk.

"Well, well," cut in Mr. Ross' voice with a mocking inflection like that of a bully who has made sure his opponent is beaten, "what are you doing, Miss Latham? You are keeping me waiting to begin dictation, do you know it?"

In the glow that heats one's blood after an ice cold shower, she put out her hand and felt the showcase at her fingers' ends. It did not take any strength at all to shove it. She must

have laughed out loud as it went. Mr. Ross half turned his chair and the heavy corner of the falling case struck him sharply on the head as, with a rattle of breaking glass, it landed sidewise on the floor. A bit of the glass grazed her hand. It all took about a second. She trembled so from sheer excitement—not fear—that she had to hold the clock on his desk close to her eyes to see the time. Half past two.

Outside it was a bright, breezy, blue day, a little nipping for spring. She thought Mr. Ross must have been hurt slightly; there had been no blood on his face—she remembered it as only a little yellower than usual. Probably he had fainted and when he had recovered and found her gone, he would think himself well rid of her. But she had shown him that he couldn't talk like that to her. She jumped up the three flights of stairs and sang out, "Oh, Ned," when she noticed his open door. No answer. No one in it. She became aware of a certain emptiness though the room seemed to be as usual, bed made, rocking chair, pictures of actresses, clipped from the Sunday supplements, hanging on the wall. But the room was too calm, too plastic, somehow, as if the restless soul that had moved about it and filled it and given it character had gone and left it shapeless for the imprint of the next comer. The top of the bureau was bare.

She turned to her room and saw a long white envelope that had been folded and stuck into the crack like a dagger. She was relieved. Probably he wanted her to meet him elsewhere. She tore it open and read:

*"Sorry, Blikey says nothing doing. We had to make an early train. See you again some time. Bye-bye."*

Pinned to the bit of white paper was a five-dollar bill.

She did not even know where he had gone.

Late that night, two detectives and a policeman rapped loudly on her door. She answered "Yes" to whatever they chose to ask her and they took her away.

## VII

THERE was a short silence of mingled pity and cynicism between the two lawyers.

"If he hadn't asked you for a match that night you'd have gone home and this needn't have happened," Mr. Widemaster mused at length.

"If you had kept your head and waited, you'd have got the fellow's note anyway, and you wouldn't have been in this fix," remarked Mr. Barstow.

She had not been listening to them.

As if translating words out of a dream, she said: "If Mr. Ross had let me off again, and the manager had only taken me on, I'd be with Ned now."



**V**ENTILATION—a scheme based upon the theory that it is better for people to die of pneumonia than of consumption.



**N**OTHING ventured, nothing kissed.





# Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

## § 1

**I**N MEMORIAM.—The pineapple Daiquiri cocktails at the Telegrafo in Havana, the musty ale at the little bar around the corner from the Alhambra in London, the Château Haut Brion '09 in the dinky inn near the waterfront at Marseilles, the dark beer in the Mathäserbräu in Munich, the vodka with a dash of peppermint in the café near the jail in Moscow, the Johannisberger Dorf '11 in the Café Bauer in Berlin, the chilled maraschino and brandy at the Café de l'Europe in Vienna, the Tokay up the alley near the railroad station in Budapest, the Bual Madeira in the roadhouse a mile and a half out of Barcelona, the brandy with grated cocoanut on the ships plying between Bahia and Buenos Aires, the Glenlivet Extra Special '88 in the bar to the left of St. Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh, the pale pink chianti in the café around the corner from Dante's monument in Florence, the crème de rose at Shepherd's in Cairo, the Bronx cocktails at the old Holland House in New York . . .

## § 2

*Hands Across the Sea.*—Specimen of the sort of American literary news that gets into the London journals, from the *London Bookseller* for February last:

Edgar Guest's books of verse have a great vogue in America, and they are as delightful as he is himself. Over there he sells in hundreds of thousands, and some day he will have a good following here. An English publisher who has a good eye for the best of modern American literature should do some-

thing toward making Guest's books known here, and we are sure his efforts would, in the not too distant future, meet with success. Probably a quarter of a million of this American poet's books were sold last year in the book stores.

No wonder Shaw and Moore stay at home, and J. C. Squire comes over to lecture to us!

## § 3

*The Honeymoon.*—The honeymoon, as it is practised in modern civilized countries, might well be called a relic of barbarism had not the barbarians, for all their vulgarities, been too civilized to indulge in it. The grossness underlying the idea of the honeymoon is of an unescapable obviousness. The legal and moral imprimatur, the pretty sentiment, the overtone of romance, the accompanying incidentals of tradition such as rice, old shoes, white ribbons, flowers and the brass band at the depot cannot avail to obscure the intrinsic coarseness of the institution. That this aspect of the honeymoon does not evade even the honeymooners themselves may be appreciated from their invariable desire and effort to escape and hide, although, true enough, the honeymooners may at the moment confuse the actual reason for this desire and effort.

At bottom, the honeymoon is merely a sex orgy conducted in public, an elaborate tournament in amour with an audience always more or less present. Imagine a civilized and well-mannered man and woman taking as boudoir confidantes chauffeurs, baggage men, negro Pullman porters, hotel clerks, bell-boys, chambermaids and several hundred

shoe-drummers, smutty old ladies, house detectives and other such hotel fauna.

#### § 4

*The Tone Art.*—Music is enormously handicapped as an art by the fact that its technique is so frightfully difficult. I do not refer, of course, to the technique of the musical executant, but to that of the composer. Any literate man can master the technique of poetry or of the novel in ten days, and that of the drama—despite all the solemn hocus-pocus of the professors who presume to teach it—in three weeks, but not even the greatest genius could do sound work in the sonata form without years of preparation. To write a good string quartette is not merely an act of creation, like writing a sonnet; it is also an act of applied science, like cutting out a set of tonsils. I know of no other art that demands so elaborate a professional training. The technique of painting has its difficulties, particularly in the direction of drawing, but a hundred men master them for one who masters counterpoint. So with sculpture. Perhaps the art which comes nearest to music in technical difficulties is architecture—that is, modern architecture. As the Greeks practised it, it was relatively simple, for they used simple materials and avoided all delicate problems of stress and strain; and they were thus able to keep their whole attention upon pure design. But the modern architect, with his complex mathematical and mechanical problems, must be an engineer before he is an artist, and the sort of engineering that he must master bristles with technical snares and conundrums. The serious musician is in even worse case. Before he may write at all he must take in and co-ordinate a body of technical knowledge that is fully as great as the outfit of an astronomer.

I say that all this constitutes a handicap on the art of music. What I mean is that it scares off many men who have sound musical ideas and would make good composers, but who have no natural talent or taste for the technical

groundwork. For one Schubert who overcomes the handicap by sheer genius there must be dozens who are repelled and discouraged. There is another, and perhaps even worse disadvantage. The potential Schuberts flee in alarm, but the Professor Jadassohns march in bravely. That is to say, music is hard for musicians, but easy for pedants, grinds and examination-passers. Its constant invasion by a hollow formalism is the result. It offers an inviting playground to the bombastic jackass whose delight it is to astonish the bourgeoisie with insane feats of virtuosity.

#### § 5

*The Art of the Movies, XXII.*—From the Bulletin of the Authors' League of America I cull the names of the head scenario editors of twenty-six of the leading motion picture companies. They follow: E. Wigginton, David W. Townsend, A. F. Dobson, Ida Harrison, L. Case Russell, Marguerite Gove, C. S. Harrison, A. K. Weinberg, Rose Loewinger, Lois Bain, Lotta Woods, Alfred Saunders, Hamilton Thompson, H. D. Ward, Joe Brandt, Charles Miller, Clyde Elliott, H. J. Reynolds, C. Seymour Clark, G. Maxwell, W. H. Leahy, M. Tournent, J. C. Brownell, Lucien Hubbard, C. Graham Baker, and R. E. Shanahan. These, it appears, are the persons who exercise chief manuscript supervision over the cinema drama. Who has ever heard of any of them? What have they ever done? What have they written? What is their qualification for the positions they occupy? Where did they come from? What has been the nature of their former experience? What do they know of literature and drama? Who found them—and where?

#### § 6

*The Dismal Science.*—Every man, as the Psalmist says, to his own poison, or poisons, as the case may be. One of mine, following hard after theology, is

political economy. What! Political economy, that dismal science? Well, why not? Its dismalness is largely a delusion, due to the fact that its chief ornaments, at least in our own day, are university professors. The professor must be an obscurantist or he is nothing; he has a special and unmatched talent for dullness; his central aim is not to expose the truth clearly, but to exhibit his profundity, his esotericity—in brief, to stagger sophomores and other professors. The notion that German is a gnarled and unintelligible language arises out of the circumstance that it is so much written by professors. It took a rebel member of the clan, swinging to the antipodes in his unearthly treason, to prove its explicitness, its resiliency, its downright beauty.

But Nietzsches are few, and so German remains soggy and political economy continues to be swathed in dullness. As I say, however, that dullness is only superficial. There is no more engrossing book in the English language than Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations": surely the eighteenth century produced nothing that can be read with greater ease today. Nor is there any inherent reason why even the most technical divisions of its subject should have gathered cobwebs with the passing of the years. Taxation, for example, is eternally lively; it concerns us more directly than either the tariff or the currency, and has just as much drama in it; moreover, it has been mellowed and made gay by as many gaudy, preposterous theories. As for foreign exchange, it is almost as romantic as young love, and quite as resistant to formulæ. Do the professors make an autopsy of it? Then read the occasional treatises of some professor of it who is not a professor, say, John Moody.

Unluckily, Moodys are almost as rare as Nietzsches, and so the amateur of such things must be content to wrestle with the professors, seeking the violet of human interest beneath the avalanche of their graceless parts of speech. A hard business, I daresay, to one not practised, and to its hardness there is

added the disquiet of a doubt. That doubt does not concern itself with the doctrine preached, at least not directly. There may be in it nothing intrinsically dubious; on the contrary, it may appear as sound as the binomial theorem, as well supported<sup>d</sup> as the dogma of infant damnation. But all the time a troubling question keeps afloat in the air, and that is briefly this: What would happen to the learned professor if he took the other side? In other words, to what extent is political economy, as professors expound and practise it, a free science, in the sense that mathematics and physiology are free sciences? At what place, if any, is speculation pulled up by a rule that beyond lies treason, anarchy and disaster?

These questions, I hope I need not add, are not inspired by any heterodoxy in my own black heart. I am, in many fields, a flouter of the accepted revelation and hence immoral, but the field of economics is not one of them. Here, indeed, I know of no man who is more orthodox than I am. I believe that the present organization of society, as bad as it is, is better than any other that has ever been proposed. I reject all the sure cures in current agitation, from government ownership to the single tax. I am in favor of free competition in all human enterprises, and to the utmost limit. I admire successful scoundrels, and shrink from Socialists as I shrink from Methodists. But all the same, the aforesaid doubt pursues me when I plow through the solemn disproofs and expositions of the learned professors of economics, and that doubt will not down. It is not logical or evidential, but purely psychological. And what it is grounded on is an unshakable belief that no man's opinion is worth a hoot, however well supported and maintained, so long as he is not absolutely free, if the spirit moves him, to support and maintain the exactly contrary opinion.

In brief, human reason is a weak and paltry thing so long as it is not wholly free reasoning. The fact lies in its very nature, and is revealed by its entire history. A man may be perfectly honest

in a contention, and he may be astute and persuasive in maintaining it, but the moment the slightest compulsion to maintain it is laid upon him, the moment the slightest external reward goes with his partisanship or the slightest penalty with its abandonment, then there appears a defect in his ratiocination that is more deep-seated than any error in fact and more destructive than any conscious and deliberate bias. He may seek the truth and the truth only and bring up his highest talents and diligence to the business, but always there is a specter behind his chair, a warning in his ear. Always it is safer and more hygienic for him to think one way than to think another way, and in that bald fact there is excuse enough to hold his whole chain of syllogisms in suspicion. He may be earnest, he may be honest, but he is not free, and if he is not free he is not anything.

Well, are the reverend professors of economics free? With the highest respect, I presume to question it. Their colleagues of archeology may be reasonably called free, and their colleagues of bacteriology, and those of Latin grammar and sidereal astronomy, and those of many another science and mystery, but when one comes to the faculty of political economy one finds that freedom is as plainly conditioned, though perhaps not as openly, as in the faculty of theology. And for a plain reason. Political economy, so to speak, hits the employers of the professors where they live. It deals, not with ideas that affect those employers only occasionally or only indirectly or only as ideas, but with ideas that have an imminent and continuous influence upon their personal welfare and security, and that affect profoundly the very foundations of that social and economic structure upon which their whole existence is based. It is, in brief, the science of the ways and means whereby they have come to such estate, and maintain themselves in such estate, that they are able to hire and boss professors. It is the boat in which they sail down perilous waters—

and they must needs yell, or be more or less than human, when it is rocked.

Now and then that yell duly resounds in the groves of learning. One remembers, for example, the trial, condemnation and execution of Prof. Dr. Scott Nearing at the University of Pennsylvania, a seminary that is highly typical, both in its staff and in its control. Nearing, I have no doubt was wrong in his notions—honestly, perhaps, but still wrong. In so far as I heard them stated at the time, they seemed to me to be hollow and of no validity. He has since discharged them from the chaotauquan stump, and at the usual hinds. They have been chiefly accepted and celebrated by men I regard as asses. But Nearing was not thrown out of the University of Pennsylvania, angrily and ignominiously, because he was honestly wrong, or because his errors made him incompetent to prepare sophomores for their examinations; he was thrown out because his efforts to get at the truth disturbed the security and equanimity of the rich ignoranti who happened to control the university, and because the academic slaves and satellites of these shopmen were restive under his competition for the attention of the student-body. In three words, he was thrown out because he was not safe and sane and orthodox. Had his aberration gone in the other direction, had he defended child labor as ardently as he denounced it and denounced the minimum wage as ardently as he defended it, then he would have been quite as secure in his post, for all his cavorting in the newspapers, as Chancellor Day was at Syracuse.

Now consider the case of the professors of economics, near and far, who have *not* been thrown out. Who will say that the lesson of the Nearing débâcle has been lost upon them? Who will say that the potency of the wealthy men who command our universities—or most of them—has not stuck in their minds? And who will say that, with this sticking remembered, their arguments against Nearing's so-called ideas

are as worthy of confidence and respect as they would be if they were quite free to go over to Nearing's side without damage? Who, indeed, will give them full credit, even when they are right, so long as they are ham-strung, nose-ringed and tied up in gilded pens?

It seems to me that these considerations are enough to cast a glow of suspicion over the whole of American political economy, at least in so far as it comes from college economists. And, in the main, it has that source, for, barring a few brilliant journalists, all our economists of any repute are professors. Many of them are able men, and most of them are undoubtedly honest men, as honesty goes in the world, but over practically every one of them there stands a board of trustees with its legs in the stock-market and its eyes on the established order, and that board is ever alert for heresy in the science of its being, and has ready means of punishing it, and a hearty enthusiasm for the business. Not every professor, perhaps, may be sent straight to the block, as Nearing was, but there are plenty of pillories and guardhouses on the way, and every last pedagogue must be well aware of it.

Political economy, in so far as it is a science at all, was not pumped up and embellished by any such academic clients and ticket-of-leave men. It was put on its legs by inquirers who were not only safe from all dousing at the campus pump, but who were also free of the mental timorousness and conformity which go inevitably with school-teaching—in brief, by men of the world, accustomed to its free air, its hospitality to originality and plain speaking. Adam Smith, true enough, was once a professor, but he threw up his chair to go to Paris, and there he met, not more professors, but all the current enemies of professors—the Nearings and Henry Georges and Karl Marxes of the time. And the book that he wrote was not orthodox, but revolutionary.

Consider the others of that bulk and beam: Bentham, Ricardo, Mill and their like. Bentham held no post at the mercy

of bankers and tripe-sellers; he was a man of independent means, a lawyer and politician, and a heretic in general practice. It is impossible to imagine such a man occupying a chair at Harvard or Princeton. He had a hand in too many pies: He was too rebellious and contumacious; he had too little respect for authority, either academic or worldly. Moreover, his mind was too wide for a professor; he could never remain safely in a groove; the whole field of social organization invited his inquiries and experiments. Ricardo? Another man of easy means and great worldly experience—by academic standards, not even educated. Today, I daresay, such meagre diplomas as he could show would not suffice to get him an instructor's berth in a fresh-water seminary in Iowa. As for Mill, he was so well grounded by his father that he knew more, at eighteen, than any of the universities could teach him, and his life thereafter was the exact antithesis of that of a cloistered pedagogue. Moreover, he was a heretic in religion and probably violated the Mann act of those days—an offense almost as heinous, in a college professor of economics, as giving three cheers for Prince Kropotkin.

I might lengthen the list, but humanely refrain. The point is that these early English economists were all perfectly free men, with complete liberty to tell the truth as they saw it, regardless of its orthodoxy or lack of orthodoxy. I do not say that the typical American economist of today is not as honest, nor even that he is not as diligent and competent, but I do say that he is not as free—that penalties would come upon him for stating ideas that Smith or Ricardo or Bentham or Mill, had he so desired, would have been free to state without damage. And in that menace there is an ineradicable criticism of the ideas that he does state, and it lingers even when they are plausible and are accepted.

In France and Germany, where the universities and colleges are controlled by the state, the practical effect of such



pressure has been frequently demonstrated. In the former country the violent debate over social and economic problems during the quarter century before the war produced a long list of professors cashiered for heterodoxy, headed by the names of Jean Jaures and Gustave Herve. In Germany it needed no Nietzsche to point out the deadening produced by this state control. Germany, in fact, got out of it an entirely new species of economist—the state Socialist who flirted with radicalism with one eye and kept the other upon his chair, his salary and his pension.

The Nearing case and the rebellions of various pedagogues elsewhere show that we in America stand within the shadow of a somewhat similar danger. In economics, as in the other sciences, we are probably producing men who are as good as those on view in any other country. They are not to be surpassed for learning and originality, and there is no reason to believe that they lack honesty and courage. But honesty and courage, as men go in the world, are after all merely relative values. There comes a point at which even the most honest man considers consequences, and even the most courageous looks before he leaps. The difficulty lies in establishing the position of that point. So long as it is in doubt, there will remain, too, the other doubt that I have described.

I rise in meeting, I repeat, not as a radical, but as one of the most hunkerous of the orthodox. I can imagine nothing more dubious in fact and wobbly in logic than some of the doctrines that amateur economists, chiefly Socialists, have set afloat in this country during the past dozen years. I have even gone to the trouble of writing a book against them; my convictions and instincts are all on the other side. But I should be a great deal more comfortable in those convictions and instincts if I were convinced that the learned professors were really in full and absolute possession of academic freedom—if I could imagine them taking the other tack now and then

without damnation to their jobs, their lecture dates, their book sales and their hides.

### § 7

*Grand Prix 1921-22.*—Excerpt from an article on "Science from the Sidelines," by Edwin E. Slosson, in the *Century Magazine*:

Appreciation of good music was supposed to be over the ears of the masses until the phonograph brought Beethoven and Wagner to every farm-house and tenement.

The editors of "Répétition Générale" herewith declare Professor Slosson the unqualified winner of the custard pie annually awarded by them to the American who, during the period in question, shall have proved himself the True Optimist.

### § 8

*Generalship.*—Woman's greatest victory is achieved by complete surrender. Let a woman surrender completely to a man's moods, thoughts, prejudices, habits of life and derelictions from honor, duty and decency, and he cannot get rid of her, however much he may desire to. He is caught irretrievably and irrevocably in the net of her mercilessly amiable self-denial and abnegation. The smiling eyes of the serpent, glued to his, have him wholly in their insidious power. He may pull and howl all he wants to, but he will find that he can't drown out the approaching doomful strains of the wedding march.

### § 9

*Theatregoer and Playgoer.*—The two words are all too commonly regarded as synonymous. Often they are not. A playgoer is one who goes to the theatre with the express and definite intention of seeing a play. A theatregoer is more often one who goes to the theatre in the spirit that one goes on an outing, that is, merely for a change, to get out, for diversion from routine. The

play is the least important thing that draws him to the theatre.

§ 10

*Notes on Honor.*—Some time ago the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association of Baltimore, composed of all the leading bankers, factory-owners, wholesalers and other profiteers of the town, invited a United States Senator to make a speech at its annual banquet. When, in the course of his harangue, the learned gentleman chanced to enunciate a doctrine that was unfriendly to profiteering, the members of the association *hissed their guest!*

A week or two later a student at the University of Michigan offended correct thought on the campus by publishing an article criticising some of the *dodos* of the university. At once a posse of "red-blooded" students was organized, and that night it lay in wait for him, and knocked him out with blows *from behind*.

§ 11

*The Coming Federal Censorship.*—Governmental censorship of the arts in America, and of the theatre in particular, is—for all the indefatigable eloquence of its opponents—bound sooner or later to become a reality. Nothing can stave it off. Where is the American still so idiotic as to believe that his taste in art will not eventually be subjected to such a censorship when his Federal Government has already subjected to official censorship his taste in tipple, amour and travel?

§ 12

*The Educational Process.*—Next to the clerk in holy orders, the fellow with the worst job in the world is the school-master. Both are underpaid, both fall steadily in authority and dignity, and both wear out their hearts trying to perform the impossible. How much the world asks of them, and how little they can actually deliver! The clergy-

man's business is to save the human race from hell: if he saves one-eighth of one per cent, even within the limits of his narrow flock, he does magnificently. The schoolmaster's is to spread the enlightenment, to make the great masses of the plain people intelligent—and intelligence is precisely the thing that the great masses of the plain people are congenitally and eternally incapable of.

Is it any wonder that the poor birchman, facing this labor that would have staggered Sisyphus Aeolusovitch, seeks refuge from its essential impossibility in a Chinese maze of empty technic? The ghost of Pestalozzi, once bearing a torch, now leads into dark places. Especially in America, where all that is bombastic and mystical is most esteemed, the art of pedagogics becomes a sort of puerile magic, a thing of preposterous secrets, a grotesque compound of false premises and illogical conclusions. Every year sees a craze for some new solution of the teaching enigma, at once simple and infallible—manual training, playground work, song and doggerel lessons, the Montessori method, the Gary system—an endless series of flamboyant arcanums. The worst extravagances of *privat dozent* experimental psychology are gravely seized upon; the uplift pours in its ineffable principles and discoveries; mathematical formulae are worked out for every emergency; there is no sure-cure so idiotic that some superintendent of schools will not swallow it.

A couple of days spent examining the literature of this New Thought in pedagogy are enough to make the judicious howl in despair. Its aim seems to be to reduce the whole teaching process to a sort of automatic reaction, to discover some master formula that will not only take the place of competence and resourcefulness in the teacher, but that will also create an artificial receptivity in the child. The merciless application of this formula (which changes every four days) now seems to be the chief end and aim of pedagogy. Teaching becomes a thing in

itself, separable from and superior to the thing taught. Its mastery is a special business, a transcendental art and mystery, to be acquired in the laboratory. A teacher well grounded in this mystery, and hence privy to every detail of the new technic (which changes, of course, with the formula), can teach anything to any child, just as a sound dentist can pull any tooth out of any jaw.

All this, I need not point out, is in sharp contrast to the old theory of teaching. By that theory mere technic was simplified and subordinated. All that it demanded of the teacher told off to teach, say, geography, was that he master the facts in the geography book and provide himself with a stout rattan. Thus equipped, he was ready for a test of his natural pedagogic genius. First he exposed the facts in the book, then he gilded them with whatever appearance of interest and importance he could conjure up, and then he tested the extent of their transference to the minds of his pupils. Those pupils who had ingested them got apples; those who had failed got fanned with the rattan. Followed the second round, and the same test again, with a second noting of results. And then the third, and the fourth, and the fifth, and so on until the last and least pupil had been stuffed to his subnormal and perhaps moronic brim.

I was myself grounded in the underlying delusions and balderdash of what is called knowledge by this austere process, and despite the eloquence of those who support newer ideas, I lean heavily in favor of it, and weep to hear that it is no more. It was crude, it was rough, and it was often not a little cruel, but it at least had two capital advantages over all the systems that have succeeded it. In the first place its machinery was simple; even the stupidest child could understand it; it hooked up cause and effect with the utmost clarity. And in the second place it tested the teacher as and how he ought to be tested—that is, for his actual capacity to teach, not for his mere technical proficiency. There

was, in fact, no technic for him to master, and hence none for him to hide behind. He could not conceal a hopeless inability to impart knowledge beneath a correct professional method.

That ability to impart knowledge, it seems to me, has very little to do with technical method. It may operate at full function without any technical method at all, and contrariwise, the most elaborate of technical methods, whether out of Switzerland, Italy or Gary, Ind., cannot make it operate when it is not actually present. And what does it consist of? It consists, in the first place, of a natural talent for dealing with children, for getting into their minds, for putting things in a way that they can comprehend. And it consists, in the second place, of a deep belief in the interest and importance of the thing taught, of a concern about it amounting to a sort of passion. A man who knows a subject thoroughly, a man so soaked in it that he eats it, sleeps it and dreams it—this man can always teach it with success, no matter how little he knows of technical pedagogy. That is because there is enthusiasm in him, and because enthusiasm is almost as contagious as fear or the barber's itch. An enthusiast is willing to go to any trouble to impart the glad news bubbling within him. He thinks that it is important and valuable for to know; given the slightest glow of interest in a pupil to start with, he will fan that glow to a flame. No hollow formalism cripples him and slows him down. He drags his best pupils along as fast as they can go, and he is so full of the thing that he never tires of expounding its elements to the dullest.

This passion, so unordered and yet so potent, explains the capacity for teaching that one frequently observes in scientific men of high attainments in their specialties—for example, Huxley, Ostwald, Karl Ludwig, William G. Sumner, James Harvey Robinson, Halsted and Osler—men who know nothing whatever about the so-called science of pedagogy, and would probably deride its alleged principles if they

heard them stated. It explains, too, the failure of the general run of university professors and high-school teachers—men who are undoubtedly competent, by the professional standards of pedagogy, but who nevertheless contrive only to make intolerable bores of the things they presume to teach. No intelligent student ever learns much from the average drover of undergraduates; what he actually carries away has come out of his text-books, or is the fruit of his own reading and inquiry. But when he passes to the graduate school, and comes among men who really understand the subjects they teach, and, what is more, who really love them, his store of knowledge increases rapidly, and in a very short while, if he has any intelligence at all, he learns to think in terms of the thing he is studying.

So far, so good. But an objection still remains, the which may be couched in the following terms: that in the average college or high school, and especially in the elementary school, most of the subjects taught are so bald and uninspiring that it is difficult to imagine them arousing the passion I have been describing—in brief, that only an ass could be enthusiastic about them. In witness, think of grammar, penmanship, arithmetic, or spelling.

This objection, at first blush, seems salient and dismaying, but only a brief inspection is needed to show that it is really of very small validity. It is made up of a false assumption and a false inference. The false inference is that there is any sound reason for prohibiting teaching by asses, if only the asses know how to do it, and do it well. The false assumption is that there are no asses in our schools and colleges today. The facts stand in almost complete antithesis to these notions. The truth is that the average schoolmaster, on all the lower levels, is and always must be essentially an ass, for how can one imagine an intelligent man engaging in so puerile an avoca-

tion? And the truth is that it is precisely his inherent asininity, and not his technical equipment as a pedagogue, that is responsible for whatever modest success he now shows.

I here attempt no heavy jocosity, but mean exactly what I say. Consider, for example, penmanship. A decent handwriting, it must be obvious, is useful to all men, and particularly to the lower orders of men. It is one of the few things capable of acquirement in school that actually help them to make a living. Well, how is it taught today? It is taught, in the main, by school-marms so enmeshed in a complex and unintelligible technic that, even supposing them to be able to write clearly themselves, they find it quite impossible to teach their pupils. Every few years sees a radical overhauling of the whole business. First the vertical hand is to make it easy; then certain curves are the favorite magic; then there is a return to slants and shadings. No department of pedagogy sees a more hideous snorting and cavorting of quacks. In none is the natural talent and enthusiasm of the teacher more depressingly crippled. And the result? The result is that our school children write abominably—that a clerk or stenographer with a simple, legible hand becomes almost as scarce as one with Greek.

Go back, now, to the old days. Penmanship was then taught, not mechanically and ineffectively, by unsound and shifting formulæ, but by passionate penmen with curly, vaselined hair and far-away eyes—in brief, by the unforgettable professors of our youth, with their flourishes, their heavy down-strokes and their lovely birds-with-letters-in-their-bills. You remember them, of course. Asses all! Preposterous popinjays and numskulls! Pathetic idiots! But they loved penmanship, they believed in the beauty and glory of penmanship, they were fanatics, devotees, almost martyrs—and so they got some touch of that passion into their pupils. Not enough, perhaps, to make

more flourishers and bird-blazoners, but enough to make sound penmen. Look at your old writing book; observe the excellent legibility, the clear strokes of your "Time is money." Then look at your child's.

Such idiots, despite the rise of "scientific" pedagogy, have not died out in the world. I believe that our schools are full of them, both in pantaloons and in skirts. There are fanatics who love and venerate spelling as a tom-cat loves and venerates catnip. There are grammatomaniacs; schoolmarms who would rather parse than eat; specialists in an objective case that doesn't exist in English; strange beings, otherwise sane and even intelligent and comely, who suffer under a split infinitive as you or I would suffer under gastro-enteritis. There are geography cranks, able to bound Mesopotamia and Beluchistan. There are zealots for long division, experts in the multiplication table, lunatic worshippers of the binomial theorem. But the system has them in its grip. It combats their natural enthusiasm diligently and mercilessly. It tries to convert them into mere technicians, clumsy machines. It orders them to teach, not by the process of emotional osmosis which worked in the days gone by, but by formulæ that are as baffling to the pupil as they are paralyzing to the teacher. Imagine what would happen to one of them who stepped to the blackboard, seized a piece of chalk, and engrossed a bird that held the class spell-bound—a bird with a thousand flowing feathers, wings bursting with parabolas and epicycloids, and long ribbons streaming from its bill! Imagine the fate of one who began "Honesty is the best policy" with an H as florid and—to the jejune—as beautiful as the initial of a medieval manuscript! Such a teacher would be cashiered and handed over to the secular arm; the very enchantment of the assembled infantry would be held as damning proof against him. And yet it is just such teachers that we should try to discover and develop. Pedagogy needs their enthusiasm, their naive belief in their own

grotesque talents, their capacity for communicating their childish passion to the childish.

But this would mean exposing the children to contact with monomaniacs, half-wits, defectives! Well, what of it? The vast majority of them are already exposed to contact with half-wits in their own homes; they are taught the word of God by half-wits on Sundays; they will grow up into Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Red Men and other such half-wits in the days to come. Moreover, as I have hinted, they are already face to face with half-wits in the actual schools, at least in three cases out of four. The problem before us is not to dispose of this fact, but to utilize it. We cannot hope to fill the schools with persons of high intelligence, for persons of high intelligence simply refuse to spend their lives teaching such banal things as spelling and arithmetic. Among the teachers male we may safely assume that 95 per cent are of low mentality, else they would depart for more appetizing pastures. And even among the teachers female the best are inevitably weeded out by marriage, and only the worst (with a few romantic exceptions) survive.

The task before us, as I say, is not to make a vain denial of this cerebral inferiority of the pedagogue, nor to try to combat and disguise it by concocting a mass of technical hocus-pocus, but to search out and put to use the value lying concealed in it. For even stupidity, it must be plain, has its uses in the world, and some of them are uses that intelligence cannot meet. One would not tell off a Galileo or a Pasteur to drive an ash-cart, nor an Ignatius Loyola to be a stock-broker, nor a Brahms to be a church organist and the father of nine children. By the same token, one would not ask a Herbert Spencer or a Duns Scotus to instruct sucklings. Such men would not only be wasted at the job; they would also be incompetent. The business of dealing with children, in fact, demands a certain childishness of mind. The best teacher, until one comes



to adult pupils, is not the one who knows most, but the one who is most capable of reducing knowledge to that simple compound of the obvious and the wonderful which slips easiest into the infantile comprehension. A man of high intelligence, perhaps, may accomplish the thing by a conscious intellectual feat. But it is vastly easier to the man (or woman) whose habits of mind are naturally on the plane of a child's. The best teacher of children, in brief, is one who is essentially childlike.

I go so far with this notion that I view the movement to introduce female bachelors of arts into the primary schools with the utmost alarm. A knowledge of Bergsonism, the Greek aorist, sex hygiene and the dramas of Percy Mackaye is not only no help to the teaching of spelling, it is a positive handicap to the teaching of spelling, for it corrupts and blows up that naïve belief in the glory and portentousness of spelling which is at the bottom of all

successful teaching of it. If I had my way, indeed, I should expose all candidates for berths in the infant grades to the Binet-Simon test, and reject all those who reveal the mentality of more than fifteen years.

Plenty would still pass. Moreover, they would be secure against contamination by the new technic of pedagogy. Its vast wave of pseudo-psychological rumble-bumble would curl and break against the hard barrier of their innocent and passionate intellects—as it probably does, in fact, even now. They would know nothing of cognition, perception, attention, the sub-conscious and all the other half-fabulous fowl of the pedagogic aviary. But they would see in reading, writing and arithmetic the gaudy charms of profound and esoteric knowledge, and they would teach these ancient branches, now so abominably in decay, with passionate gusto, and irresistible effectiveness, and a gigantic success.



## Touch

*By George O'Neil*

**G**IVE me your hand if you would have me say  
The few things of a world that is my own;  
Touch as we speak; there is no other way  
To tell which syllable is more than tone.

My thoughts are shadows while your face is near,  
Smoke over flame, and so the truth is blurred;  
But take my hand and you shall find it clear  
In one sure rhythm under every word.



**G**IRL babies and boy babies both learn that they can get what they want by crying. The girl babies are the ones who do not forget this salient fact when they grow up.



**T**HE men who were saving up for rainy days are sorry that they didn't start saving up for the dry ones.

# Mystery

By Hartley H. Hepler

EMERGING from his reverie, the young poet gazed wonderingly at the object which had just been placed before him.

Upon an oblong base of some glazed white material, slightly concave in form, was imposed a small circular object, also white, but plainly of a different composition.

In the center of this smaller circle was another, rising slightly from the surface, giving the appearance of a globe nearly submerged.

This smallest circle, or globe, was of a rich golden color, affording to the sensitive eye of the poet a pleasing contrast to the surrounding white.

He eyed it again. It was somehow reminiscent of the work of one of the younger sculptors, but which one of them he was unable to remember.

Considering further, however, he realized that it could not be that, for he seemed to recall having seen something similar years before, at a time when he took no interest in artistic things, and would not have noticed the sculptor's work.

Suddenly a flood of recollections overwhelmed him, and he recognized the object.

It was a fried egg on a platter.



## The Twilight of the Grape

By George Sterling

*HOMER, you would have pitied our wan choir,  
Refused to-day the madness of the vine,  
For Chian tapsters poured for you the wine,  
And in your ample beard, Song's mighty sire,  
Sparkled the ruddy drops above the lyre,  
When, the good cup put by, you smiled and sang,  
To Troy's high doom the cedarn rafters rang,  
And red within the flagon gleamed her fire.*

*Would that, beyond these prim, denuded days,  
We might behold your undisheartened ghost,  
Chanting the tale of Helen's royal sin!  
Oh! that we might return your noble gaze  
And lift to her our goblets for a toast,  
Housed for the night at some eternal Inn!*

# Signor Saverio's Nose

*By Luigi Lucatelli*

(Translated by Morris Bishop)

SIGNOR SAVERIO had a duck-bill nose, a very rare variety characterized by an exceptional bulbousness at the extremity of the organ, which thus gained somewhat the appearance of an American-style shoe.

Undoubtedly it was a most serious defect, a truth which was particularly well brought out by the candor of his wife. When, in the midst of a bitter dispute, he had come to the point of threatening a sound beating, she cried at him, scornfully:

"What, you? With that nose?"

Saverio turned abject. Evidently, he thought, a man with such a nose cannot give his wife a good trimming. He submitted placidly to the most outrageous invectives. His lady finally convinced herself that she had been a sort of angel of charity to wed a man with such a nose, although that despised appendage was attached to a rather decent sort of fellow. And as always happens when a woman persuades herself that she is too good, she treated him unspeakably badly. He bore it; he was a softish person, sick with an eager longing to be weak, fragile and petted. He tried to find consolation outside the home, but his new love betrayed him; how could she be faithful to a man with that nose?

He let himself run down; he neglected his clothes and his hair, he became slovenly and dusty, he would slink into the darkest corner of his café, where there were no mirrors, and get drunk on strong liquors; then he would dream of having another nose, and of a soft, perhaps morbid hand slowly caressing his face, as if to smooth away the pain of a burning wound.

His whole being was sunk in profound debasement, in his fixed certainty of meriting no good from any man. His physical defect had become great and exalted, enormous as the shadow of a mountain darkening an entire valley, since he found his despair at the bottom of every emotion. If he had a discussion with anyone he noticed that the speaker would at a certain point put on a dictatorial manner, as if to say: "But after all, begging your pardon, how can a man argue when he has a nose like that?"

Perhaps the world would have pardoned him a murder, but no one could pardon him that duck-bill protruding illogically from between his eyes. No one would admit the possibility that he could have serious emotions; perhaps they would have tolerated him if he had let the world kick him about or if he had sung comic songs. He still remembered how, when a boy at school, he had dared to write a pair of hendecasyllabics. The teacher had confiscated the paper, exclaiming: "Don't you try to be sentimental, you with that nose!"

One day he got more drunk than usual and went for a walk in one of the city's parks. It was a blistering hot day; the sky blazed with bright, savage, relentless flame; crickets sang under the hedges. He might have borne it, had not the tiny cheep-cheep, repeated a thousandfold, incessantly, like an irritating phrase on the lips of an implacable person, followed him everywhere. He stopped his ears, leaned his head against a tree, tried to whistle a tune to distract his mind, but he could not drive from his ears that torturing refrain. He felt

a physical horror of repeated words, of things which always sound the same; he felt confusedly two longings: that the crickets would be still, and that someone would say to him, for example, "What ugly eyes! What an ugly mouth!"

In that case it seemed to him that he could rest a little. But as no one took pity on him, he went to the side of a

pool sleeping beneath the pale and burning sky, looked at his nose in the water and let himself slip toward his own image, to cancel it, never to see it again.

When a policeman informed his concierge that he had committed suicide, she exclaimed:

"But it must be a mistake. Impossible! With that nose!"



## Though the Brightness Beckon

*By R. Lynn Riggs*

I SHOULD like to dazzle  
Like a bursting star,  
Or drum on the timbrels  
Where the worldings are.

I should like to sparkle  
Like a wild wine,  
Setting heads a-reeling  
Foolishly as mine.

Where the dark corners are  
I would not be,  
Who could be a buccaneer  
Striding down the sea.

But though the brightness beckon  
I shall retain  
Memories of mustiness  
And memories of rain,—

Memories of rain falling  
Silver on the eaves,  
And the cool silken music  
Of whispering leaves.



# Waldie

*By Thyra Samter Winslow*

## I

FRED WALDEN was a traveling salesman for a wholesale hardware company. If asked his profession he would have told you that he was a drummer. He traveled out of Chicago and his friends called him Waldie.

Waldie was short and rather stout. When he sat down you couldn't tell that he was short. It was his legs that were not long enough and they were also too thin. His abdomen rounded out above them and he resembled the Palmer Cox brownies that delighted the children of the last generation. He wore snappy clothes and thought that fancy waistcoats were rather good form. His idea of being dressed up, in fact, was to put on a fancy waistcoat instead of the one that came with his suit. Although he wore ready-made "stouts" he managed to get suits that had little extra things the matter with them, lapels a trifle too pointed, pockets with fancy flaps. These suits were always made of smooth goods and fitted tightly. His watch-chain was heavy and had a large lodge emblem on it. He was always very neat.

Waldie's face was beginning to sag with the years. His complexion was rather red and coarse. His chin was weak and his mouth was flabby and drooped at the corners, giving him the expression of an old and pouting baby. His eyes were light blue and protruded, but as his lashes and brows were thin you didn't notice them a great deal. His hair was unusually thick for his years and a mixed gray. He parted it on one side and brushed it smoothly, so that it looked almost like a toupée.

The territory that Waldie covered was in the Middle West and his trips lasted about three months. Then he would have a few weeks in Chicago, when he would report at the wholesale hardware company every day and meet the members of the firm and the buyers and any of his customers who were in town. He would revise his prices, learn about the merchandise and be off on another three months' trip. He made several large cities and numerous small towns. He would travel out of the cities, coming back to them to spend Sundays, usually. Waldie was considered a good-natured fellow and a good salesman and was liked by his firm. He made fair commissions, though not as high as he had made years before when mail-order catalogues had not come into competition with his customers.

Waldie's wife's name was Evelyn. He had met her in a little town in Iowa. Evelyn had been a rather pretty girl then. He had been sitting out in front of the hotel, talking with another salesman, when Evelyn passed. He was in his late twenties then, and was only beginning to grow stout. Evelyn was five years younger. She wore a freshingham frock. After she passed she turned and gave him a sly smile. Waldie jumped to his feet and whispered to his friend that there was "something doing," and rushed after her. Evelyn pretended indifference until after she turned off the main street. Then she sauntered along slowly, waiting for him to catch up. There was the usual conversation, punctuated with flatteries and incredulous exclamations: "I don't believe a word you say," and "You drummers think you are fresh, don't you?"



Waldie walked home with Evelyn and that night he called for her and took her to the Opera House, where a stock company was playing "Her Only Sin." He saw Evelyn every night during his stay there—and he managed to stay over Sunday.

By not allowing him to kiss her until the third evening of their acquaintance and by many protestations of "I'm not the sort of girl who picks up men," and "I don't know what you can be thinking of me," Evelyn managed to convince Waldie that she was a rather timid little thing. He wrote to her, after he left town, five- and six-page letters in rather a large but fairly even handwriting, on one side of the paper, with a picture of his hotel at the top. He would write on Sunday, after he had sent his report to the firm and had written his weekly letter to his mother, who was a widow and lived with one of his married sisters in Urbana and to whom he sent a post-office order every month.

In return, Evelyn would write to him, quite long letters in a slanting, thin, uneven hand, on pink or blue letter-paper, with words crossed out and apologies and little jokes about the spelling. Neither of them had anything important to say, but they managed to fill the letters with stories of how they passed their time, Waldie's almost baldly truthful, Evelyn's full of little misstatements and exaggerations, all of which were to show her goodness and her popularity.

Evelyn was a good enough girl. She was lazy and, like all small-town girls, would have preferred living in a city. She was not popular in her home town and preferred traveling men. As a matter of fact, she walked past the Palace Hotel every day and picked up men as often as she saw good-looking young strangers who seemed interesting. She discarded those who were insultingly fresh and continued to see those who took her to places or brought her candy and music. She didn't care for books and didn't want flowers: "spending money for them is so foolish, when they wither right up." She was clever enough about finding out which drummers were

married, and of course did not care for them if they were. She liked Waldie and saw in that good-natured fellow just what she was looking for.

Almost without his knowledge, their letters grew more and more affectionate. Waldie came back to Evelyn's town a few months later and this time met some of her girl friends and the men with whom they were going. Evelyn asked him to her home to dinner and he said what a treat it was to sit down at a home table. She took him, too, to a dance at a local club and he brought her large boxes of candy and treated her and her girl friends to sodas in the confectionery store next to the hotel.

Waldie did not object to matrimony. In fact, he thought it would be rather nice to marry. He made enough money to support a wife and he had taken it for granted that he would marry some day, but he had never made any definite advances. He, too, had flirted with girls in small towns, but usually he was a little wary. He had seen, in the girls who made overtures to him, definite attempts to "work" him for candy and treats and he objected to this. In Chicago he had met a number of girls who might have proved suitable helpmates, but in common with all other very simple men he had been most afraid of the women who had not been dangerous. To him, all city women were more or less "too wise," while country girls possessed a certain desired innocence. Evelyn had a nice, brisk little manner, a giggle, a quiet way. She seemingly made no advances and was shy and tried to please. Six months more and he found himself engaged to be married.

## II

WALDIE and Evelyn were married in Evelyn's home, with the family minister officiating. Evelyn's married sister was matron of honor and her best friend was bridesmaid. She was married in a blue traveling suit and carried a bouquet of white roses and lilies of the valley. There was quite an item in the local

newspaper about it. She and Waldie left immediately after the ceremony for Chicago.

After a short time spent in a second-class hotel on the South Side, Evelyn and Waldie went to housekeeping in a four-room apartment, buying the conventional furniture of that day, which Waldie got at wholesale through a drummer for a furniture house. When the North Side of Chicago became popular, years later, they moved to a more expensive apartment of the same number of rooms near Wilson Avenue, getting new furniture, a walnut set with twin beds for the bedroom and Colonial mahogany living-room furniture.

For a few years Waldie was quite happy. Evelyn learned to cook and became a fair housekeeper. She had a woman in by the day to do the cleaning and the washing, but did the cooking herself. They didn't have any children. Waldie would spend his time on the road as he had done before. But being married added certain pleasures even to this. He wore Evelyn's picture in the back of his watch and it was pleasant to look at it or to open it and show other drummers the picture of "the wife." He carried several Kodak pictures of Evelyn in his cardcase, which he showed, too—a snap taken at the beach in a bathing suit; one standing in front of the apartment-house, so that Waldie could see her new Spring suit; one of the two of them taken on a picnic, with a friend's car as a background.

Every Sunday, as he had done since he met her, Waldie wrote Evelyn a letter. As usual, first he would write his weekly report to the firm, brow-furrowed, wasting many sheets of paper counting and figuring. Then, this aside, he would turn to the letter to Evelyn. He had two sisters and a brother, all married. Until the death of his mother, which occurred five years after his marriage, he wrote to the sister with whom his mother lived and to his mother, but after his mother's death he dropped this correspondence.

Evelyn was the only person to whom

he wrote. He knew, though he did not definitely think about it, that she was the only person who cared anything about hearing from him. He wrote her quite long letters. It was his only means of self-expression. He would tell her whether the hotels had been good or bad, how the weather had been, something about business and business acquaintances he had met. She knew about Quimby, the grouch who would give an order when you least expected it and who had a sale of alarm clocks every year; of Brussels Brothers, who were always looking for novelties; of the funny old man who had the special counter for curious ten-cent articles.

He did not describe these people and things with much cleverness, but he enjoyed writing about them. He would go to what theatres and entertainments the towns afforded and later, when motion pictures became important, he would go to those, telling Evelyn meticulously what he had seen.

Waldie's life was not unpleasant. To many people, of course, it would have been impossible. But he was a simple fellow and did not mind the train jumps and the uncertain accommodations. Although always spoken of as a "good fellow" and a "good mixer," and although he did greet people with a great friendliness and always had stories and anecdotes appropriate for any occasion, he did not have the art of furthering acquaintances. Other drummers managed to get a certain number of home dinners from customers. Waldie ate his meals in the hotel dining-room. He was not a forward fellow and even in the hotels he was apt to be alone most of the time, though he had dozens of casual acquaintances who called him Waldie and seemed glad to see him.

Waldie would hurry from one customer to another, getting orders as best he could, come back to his hotel to wash up before dinner, sometimes even, in the larger hotels, putting on a fancy vest as his contribution toward dressing for dinner. Then, in the evening, he would light a large but inexpensive cigar, stroll through the business street, peering into

the windows and evolving ideas for hardware window displays, few of which ever amounted to anything. Then he would seek out whatever amusement the town offered or go to the rooms of the lodge to which he belonged.

He read the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the town's local paper. He got to be more of a movie fan as time passed and marveled continually at the fine motion picture houses the small towns built in order to attract the nearby country trade. One of his beliefs was that you saw the feature motion pictures in the small towns before you saw them in the city and that small town pictures were really better—better acting and less sensational. He would write Evelyn what he had seen and ask, "Has this picture been shown in Chicago yet? You mustn't miss it when they show it. It is a great picture." He preferred frank melodrama and called any exaggerated show of emotion fine acting. The De Mille pictures were his favorites.

At the end of his trips, he would return promptly to Chicago. At first these reunions with Evelyn were very happy. Evelyn would be patiently waiting for him and would plan to have the things to eat that he liked best. They would spend many hours together in the apartment and go to theatres and movies. They liked dining out and preferred Hungarian and Italian restaurants, where, seemingly, you get full course dinners for remarkably reasonable sums. Waldie knew of several restaurants where you got such "first-class meals" cheaply and he was forever writing their addresses on the backs of his business cards for his friends. He knew the names of several Greek and Italian dishes that were served as specials in these restaurants and he would describe them with great gusto. He thought that this made him quite a cosmopolitan.

### III

BUT as time passed, Evelyn and Waldie began to find that they had less

and less in common. He disliked the women friends she had made in Chicago. She complained that as long as he wasn't there she had to go with someone and he ought to be glad she didn't run around with men, the way most traveling men's wives did. Her best friend was a widow with reddened hair and Waldie said she looked fast and was no company for his wife. Waldie almost forbade Evelyn to go with her and did finally issue a rule that "she can't hang around here while I'm in town." The other women Evelyn went with seemed equally disagreeable to him.

But he could not show Evelyn anyone whom he thought better company for her, and he really did nothing definite to help make her life happier while he was away. He might have left his traveling position while he was still a young man, but beyond a few vague attempts to get into something else he really never considered it. Perhaps the only thing he could have done was to have become a salesman in a retail store at a smaller salary, and this never even occurred to him. The plans that did come to him, when he talked about leaving the road, were concerned with going into business with a friend. As this took capital and as the only money they had was a little that Evelyn's mother had left them, which she did not care to trust to Waldie's business ability, nothing ever came of his nebular plans.

After a few more years, Evelyn and Waldie found definitely that they did not get along well together. Evelyn grew thinner and her skin became sallow and she lost all of the fresh prettiness that had at first attracted him. Each time Waldie saw her he received a fresh shock of disappointment. She rouged her thin cheeks and the rouge ill became them. He did not like the way she fixed her hair and spoke to her about it. But it was thin hair and Evelyn did not wash it frequently and had no art in arranging it, so in spite of Waldie's hints to "puff it out a little," it hung in uneven wisps or stiff, artificial waves around her face.

If Waldie and Evelyn had been with each other constantly, they might have grown old together peaceably enough, as so many couples do, without realizing that they were aging at all. Waldie would never have noticed that Evelyn was fading. But, coming off the road each time he would find something about her a little different, a little less agreeable. Her neck became full of folds of skin and the cords under her chin seemed almost repellent. Her shoulders under the thin waists she always wore were bony. There were deep hollows under her eyes. He did not like her hands, her thin fingers. Because he did not like her, physically, he disagreed with everything she said to him. Half an hour after he arrived home they would start in to quarrel about nothing at all, about something one of them had said, a broken chair, a meal, the smell of Waldie's cigar—anything.

Evelyn liked Waldie as little as he liked her, but it was easier for her to put up with him. Most of the time she lived in lazy comfort, had as many luxuries as her friends, and far less to do. It was not difficult to assume an appearance of friendliness when Waldie was at home. Gradually, though, as Waldie became more and more disagreeable, she ceased to be careful, stopped trying to please him. They quarreled incessantly from the time he arrived home until he went out on the road again. It was almost a relief for Waldie when the time came for him to get his samples ready and pack his bag.

On the road, though, a transformation took place. After a week or two Waldie would think of Evelyn, not as she had been the last time he saw her, thin, harsh-voiced, unpleasant, but more as the girl she used to be, eager to get and answer his letters, pleasant, giggling. No matter in what mood he had been in when he left her, and his moods were never pleasant any more when he was at home, as soon as he was on the road he would start writing long letters again, start looking forward to the letters from her.

Evelyn's first letters after he left—

on cheap white paper now—would be a bit curt, full of sarcasm. But she was not clever, and after a while she could not think of cutting things to say, and then she, too, was dulled by the distance and by the necessity for writing. Although her life was full of the things she liked to do best when Waldie was not at home—it was much duller when he was there, due to the fact that she could not see her friends, and had to be with him, instead, and cook meals and keep the house in order—she, too, formed the habit of writing fairly long letters and of writing in apparent friendliness.

So they went on—Waldie, short, fat, with thick, greying hair, his face red and sagging, his suits tight and fancy; Evelyn, thin and annoying. Waldie would quarrel at home and then, on the road, would write his long, careful letter on Sunday.

#### IV

ALL the time, Waldie had not in any way doubted Evelyn's fidelity to him. To be sure, he had once accused her of violating it, but it was more to justify himself and to say as unpleasant things as possible to her than from any real distrust. He took it for granted that, because he supported Evelyn, which he did as well as he could, she would be faithful to him. Waldie himself had had several illicit affairs during the recent years, though they had meant little enough to him. They had all been short, unlovely. A chambermaid in a hotel in one town had appealed to him. There had been a waitress in another town, and a widow living at the hotel where he stopped in a third. He scarcely remembered their names.

He never thought of comparing these fancies to the serious affairs that other men had. He did not compare these women to his wife. Although he quarreled with Evelyn whenever he saw her, as soon as he was on the road he conceived of her as a superior creature, one far removed from anything as sordid as the affairs he had had. He would

never have even mentioned her name or shown her picture to these women.

What happened then was a great shock to Waldie. He had covered his territory in about a week less than the time he usually took. Instead of telegraphing to Evelyn, he decided to surprise her and arrive in Chicago a whole week ahead. He really had no definite reason for the surprise. They had kissed each other good-bye, as usual, when he left, the kiss forming, as always, an artificial ending to their weeks of quarrels. He had no illusions of a pleasant homecoming. But he was glad at the thought of getting off the road, of spreading out in his Morris chair and eating home-cooked food or one of the special dishes at his favorite Italian restaurant.

Waldie got off the train and took the elevated to Wilson Avenue. It was perhaps one o'clock at night. He stopped at an all-night drug-store at the corner and bought a large box of candy, a kind that he knew Evelyn liked—he always brought her some trifle. He walked briskly the three blocks to his apartment, feeling in his pocket for his key-ring, on which was the key that he used at such infrequent intervals.

He let himself in at the apartment-house front door, which was locked, then opened his own apartment door, setting his suitcase inside. He was quiet. He thought perhaps he could undress and get to bed without waking Evelyn, for it made her cross to be aroused and he knew that the joy of seeing him a week in advance would not be enough to make her restrain herself. He would sleep on the living-room davenport, which opened into a bed. Time enough for quarrels tomorrow, when he would feel more like quarreling.

He snapped on the hall light. The foyer hall opened onto the living-room, the bedroom and the kitchen. There was an archway into the living-room, which was connected with the dining-room by another archway. As usual, the bedroom and the kitchen doors were closed. Waldie took off his hat and coat

and was about to hang them on the built-in oak hat-rack, when he saw that another hat hung there—a man's hat. A man's overcoat, too. With a terrible premonition, he looked into the living-room. Evelyn did not smoke, but the brass smoking stand that had been a birthday present to him a few years before had been used that evening, was full of ashes. Stealthily, now, he tiptoed to the one bedroom and opened the door. From the hall light, he saw the whole room, saw what he was looking for. His wife lay asleep in her own bed. In the other bed—his twin bed—lay a strange man, a man he had never seen before. The man was thin and gaunt looking and needed a shave. He was snoring slightly and his mouth was open. The only impression of the man that Waldie carried away was that his hair was thin and that he was decidedly homely.

Waldie knew, even then, that it was within his rights as an American to kill the man, if he felt like it—to fight him, anyhow. The man did not look strong. There would be no great physical danger. Waldie had no gun with him nor was there one in the house, but he knew he would not have used a gun, anyhow. Carefully he closed the door to the bedroom, waited anxiously, heard no sound, picked up his hat and coat, put out the light, picked up his suitcase, closed the door after him, and went out, down the street, to Wilson Avenue and the elevated. An hour later he had registered at a second-class downtown hotel.

## V

His married life was over. Waldie knew that. The first feeling he had—after a feeling of stunned disbelief—was that of outrage. Evelyn, whom he had trusted, Evelyn, his wife, had dared do this thing! While he was on the road slaving for her—a slave—that's what he was!—she had put this thing over on him—cheated him! This man—whoever he was—was asleep . . . in his bed! The fact that the man was accustomed to his bed, that he was able



to sleep in it, even snore in it, was the thing that seemed to hurt worst. This was no new affair, evidently. Even while Evelyn had been writing to him little neighborhood gossip about her card club and the movies, this thing had been going on—he had been cheated—his wife . . . !

The next feeling was of relief. Of course—didn't he dislike Evelyn? Certainly he did. He hated her, had hated her for months, years even. He hated everything about her, her eyes, her skin, her hair, the clothes she wore, the things she said. He hadn't even thought he could be free, that was all. Here was a way out, a better way out than he had ever thought of. Why, he wouldn't even have to see her again. That man—what an ugly fellow he was!—and to think that Evelyn had taken up with him! But, for that matter, with her ugly, leather skin, it was surprising she had found anyone. But she *had* found someone. For some reason, Waldie became almost pompous, almost set up over the fact that his wife had been untrue to him, that she had found another man.

Waldie saw his firm the next day. He didn't wait his usual length of time in Chicago, but started out on the road immediately, taking in a small additional territory.

A few days later, from a small town, he wrote a letter to Evelyn. He told her that he had heard, "had proofs" of her infidelity. He led her to believe that he had received letters. He couldn't admit, even to her, that he had been in the house and hadn't done anything but tiptoe out again. He was magnanimous, gentlemanly. He was almost elegant in his accusations. He said that "as you evidently prefer someone else to me," she might get a divorce, herself, that he had given her cause and could give her more, if she liked, that she might even wait and sue for desertion if she preferred—he was through with her forever, of course—as long as his home was broken up—the devil who did it. . . .

Evelyn was quite willing to have a  
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divorce, it appeared. She wrote that she would get a lawyer and sue for a divorce at once. She did not know which of her friends had been false enough to tell tales—lies—on her—of course there was no truth in them—but as long as he felt that way—and if he had given her cause. . . .

During the next months Waldie almost strutted. He felt suddenly younger, elated. He would be a free man soon, without ties, able to do anything. Every woman he saw looked different, alluring. What if he hadn't found out, had been tied to Evelyn for always? What a good thing it was that he had found out about her! What an ugly woman she had got to be! Why hadn't he found out sooner?

Evelyn sued for a divorce and Waldie did not contest the suit. She was granted a moderate alimony, quite enough to live on comfortably in about the same way she had lived before. The alimony, which Waldie hadn't thought about, meant that he would have to economize in just the same ways he had always economized. He had thought that he'd have more money. Still, there was enough—he might make more money—this was going to be a good year, they said.

He ordered a new suit in one of the larger towns—he wore an advertised brand and knew what he wanted. It was a brown suit, with threads of different colors running through it, a sleek brown suit that would hold its creases after pressing. He noticed that he was getting a little thicker through the waist—couldn't afford to get any stouter now that life seemed opening to him. . . .

Waldie felt important. He would tell his acquaintances something of his domestic troubles, speak of "my wife's lawyers," things like that. It surprised him to find that no one was interested.

Waldie didn't know just what to do with his new freedom. He found, suddenly, that there was nothing to do with it. On the road, except his weekly letter from and to Evelyn, things were not changed in any way.

He had several affairs with women,

ugly affairs, that left him feeling ashamed, dissatisfied, disgusted. This wasn't the sort of thing he wanted out of life.

A customer took him home to dinner and he met the customer's wife and an unmarried sister—an unattractive woman of about forty. She preened and coquetted. Waldie smiled and chatted and got away as soon as he could. He wouldn't let another woman ring him in. He'd been duped once.

He met other women. They did not interest him. He tried to meet women who would interest him, but he found that no one really cared anything about a short, stout, red-faced drummer for a hardware firm. Young women looked him over appraisingly and left him alone. The pretty girls who passed the hotels smiled at the younger drummers, now. Those who smiled at him were definitely cheap. He was cheap, too, of course—but, after all. . . .

He seemed to have a lot of time on his hands. Sunday, especially, seemed empty. He would get up, go down to the lobby, get the local and the Chicago and the St. Louis newspapers and read them all, jokes, news and feature stories, in the lobby or in his room. In the lobby, at the little writing tables, men would be busy writing—writing letters home. Waldie had no home. The newspapers seemed without interest. He would write out, laboriously, his report to the firm and then walk around town, hoping for adventure.

He started in writing long letters to his sisters and his brothers, with whom he had not communicated in years. They were not easy letters to write. When he was through he felt none of the joy of creation that he had felt after writing a letter to Evelyn. The answers did not satisfy him, either. He had not kept up with his family. Not one of his relatives interested him or was interested in him. He knew nothing of their lives, of their affairs.

## VI

WALDIE got old suddenly. He began to lose interest in hardware even. The

stories in the smoking-cars seemed to lose flavor. He didn't sit eagerly forward waiting for his turn to tell one nor try to save those he heard: "Listen, Evelyn, here's a good one I heard on my last trip—" Traveling, for the first time, became unpleasant to him. What was the use of it all, anyhow? He didn't even have a home to go to in the end. What was the use of ever having been married, anyhow, if it ended like this? Why, the only reason for marriage, at all, was so you'd have somebody as company when you got old—when nobody else wanted you. He could have had enough friends when he was young. Now, when he needed someone—was beginning to need someone. . . . He felt all unattached—he didn't fit in nor touch the world at any place.

After all, maybe he had been too harsh on Evelyn. She probably hadn't wanted to be untrue to him. When a woman is left alone month after month. It was too bad he had found out. After all, hadn't he been untrue to Evelyn, too? Finding out, that was it—and that had been his fault—he shouldn't have come home like that—and if he hadn't found out. . . . Evelyn was getting old, too—maybe that man didn't love her—had left her. . . .

It was Sunday mornings that he couldn't stand it. If he could only write to Evelyn. . . . Of course, he could have written a letter and not sent it—he was no fool, though—he told himself that.

Would that man marry Evelyn—that ugly, gaunt fellow without enough hair? Did they quarrel? After all, Evelyn was a good cook—the house was always neat. Of course Evelyn ran around, but, after all, when he wasn't there she wanted some life, some pleasure. What if the man *did* marry Evelyn? He wouldn't have to pay alimony then; that was something. But even that. . . . He hated to think of Evelyn marrying anyone else.

He couldn't stand Sunday and no letter. He'd ask for his mail every day, and reach out, pitifully eager, when he

saw something in the cubbyhole allotted to him. No letter from Evelyn! Of course Evelyn wouldn't write. She didn't know where he was, even. She could find that out, if she wanted to, by telephoning the hardware company—she had done that, sometimes, when she lost his route. After all, though, she wouldn't write—he had accused her of being untrue to him—why—they were divorced. . . .

Sunday—no letter—he began to plan letters to Evelyn, to start them, to tear them up again. Once he wrote a letter, a long letter, full of commonplace phrases, all about the movie he had seen, the old customer who had given him an order. He carried it with him all day and tore it up in the evening. It hurt him when he tore it up. Never to get letters or to write letters—no time at all. . . .

When he met new people, now, if he had not told them of his divorce—and he told few people after the first days—he would take out the Kodak pictures from his cardcase—he had always been adding to them and destroying the old ones, so they were still good—and show them the pictures of "the wife." "A fine little woman if there ever was one."

Then, one Sunday he found he couldn't hold out. He wrote a letter to Evelyn, a short one. ". . . What about it, Evelyn? We are getting old—if you'd like to hear from me. . . ."

He was restless all week. A week later he had a reply. It was in Evelyn's thin, uneven handwriting—a cheap white envelope. He was afraid to open it, carried it to his room, tore off the end of the envelope, took out the letter . . . what if she was going to get married . . . !

## VII

It was all right . . . all right! Evelyn said something about "surprised and glad to hear from you," and something more about old friends being best and being lonely, so that he knew the other man was no longer around. The man had probably left her. Poor Evelyn. It was all right. He could have Evelyn

again—a home again, letters. . . .

On Sunday he sat down at a desk in the hotel lobby, a mission desk against the wall with a colored glass globe over it. He prepared his weekly report slowly and copied it, addressed the envelope, put the report in and sealed it, all ready to send. That was done. He wrote a letter to his brother—there was no need to write to his brother any more now, but he had to answer his letter. He put that letter in an envelope and sealed it, too.

He was writing to Evelyn. . . . The thick pen flew across the cheap, lined paper with the picture of the hotel at the top. He told her his news, little things, about old customers, an acquaintance he had met, a movie he had seen—had she seen it? A good picture and worth looking out for. He'd be back in Chicago in a month more. They could get married again, try it again, if she would have him. It was his fault, he knew, when he lost his temper. He was getting older, would have more patience with her—they'd get some new records for the Victrola. He had heard some good jazz records—had she heard that new one . . . ?

No word of the man or of infidelity or of things that had happened between them. Waldie knew he could never mention the man or anything he knew or find out anything more—if the man had deserted her—anything.

Even as he wrote, Waldie knew what would happen. He would get back to Chicago—marry Evelyn—and in a week more they would be quarreling. He could see her thin face, her neck with cords in it, her sharp nose, her beady eyes. What of it? Evelyn really was no homelier than other women her age. He was no beauty himself. What could he expect? What if they *did* quarrel? Even quarreling was something. Evelyn cared for him. Hadn't she written? In the whole world she was the only one who did care at all. He needed just that, someone who cared, even if it meant only quarreling—someone to go home to, to see, to think about, to write letters to.

# Technique

*By H. H. Hardy*

**S**HE was rather tall and about twenty-five pounds overweight, and while reason tells me that her feet must have been mates, I found it almost impossible to believe it at the time.

But she was an A.B. and a Ph.D., to say nothing of an LL.B., and could not be overlooked, so I took a firm grip on her massive waist and led her forth.

She puffed tremendously and her nose shone as though varnished, and

when she trod on my foot with the delicate airiness of a rhinoceros her distress was so apparent that I was moved to a few compliments for the easing of her spirit.

I remembered that she was a very learned and accomplished woman of the very highest standing mentally and socially, and so I brought my lips close to her ear:

"You little devil," I whispered, "you fox-trot like an angel!"



## Fable of a Wise Moth

*By M. G. Sabel*

**O**NCE upon a time  
A very wise moth  
Flew away from a bright light,  
Got lost in the dark,  
And decapitated himself  
Upon a broken electric light bulb.



**A** MAN starts in by believing in God and ends with barely believing in his wife.



# The Higher Learning in America

## VIII

### The University of Virginia

By *W. Carl Whitlock*

#### I

**S**AYS the Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume XXVIII (Vet to Zym), page 125:

VIRGINIA, UNIVERSITY OF, a state institution for higher learning, situated at Charlottesville among the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Its buildings, arranged around a large rectangular lawn and erected from a plan prepared by Thomas Jefferson, are noted for their architectural effect. . . . The University comprises twenty-six independent schools . . . to form six departments . . . The University traces its beginning to an act of the legislature in 1803 for incorporating the Trustees of Albemarle Academy." Etc., etc.

Tersely and pithily put, as always in the india-papered household compendium, and true, but lacking the rounded completeness that makes for eternal verity. To the barbarians north of the Potomac, it gives geographical locus to what was only an unfamiliar name; to the fortunates south of that stream it errs in being a human, all-too-human, summary of "The University."

To say that the General Public is ignorant of almost everything pertaining to Virginia were to put it mildly. Back in the first decade of the present precocious century, when J. A. Rector, "of this institution," was consistently covering the hundred yards in nine and three-fifths seconds or better, the popular gaze rested tolerantly upon us; and again in the

fall of 1915, when Yale took the latter end of a 10-to-0 score, we basked briefly in the limelight. But, in the main, the diversities of Charlottesville, Va., Charleston, W. Va., and Charlotte, N. C., and their distinguishing characteristics, are too much for the Northern mind. It lumps them all together in impotent despair.

Infrequently, however, some visitor from the outside world blunders in upon us; gazes in breathless wonderment at the green rippling terraces and white columns of the Lawn, and the noble red-brick proportions of the Rotunda; lounges and teas in the Colonnade Club with a group of charming professors, possessed of exceptional social gifts; watches the twos and threes of most un-collegiate students (in the elegant phrase of *Vanity Fair* "conspicuously, but not exaggeratedly, well dressed men") walk with unimpeachable dignity to and from classrooms; and wonders what it's all about. Not at Harvard nor at Yale has he encountered such a serene detachment from what is commonly considered the chief purpose of a university; if anywhere, he may have sensed at Princeton a similar air as of gentlemanly aloofness, of elaborate negligence in a beautiful setting. But from the machinery of education proper, not a whir.

Thus the report that the visiting Joshua carries home to Cohoes or



Kenosha is mainly true—that in the South's most representative university he found no trace of the higher learning. Other things he may have found: Greek temples conceived by Thomas Jefferson and Stanford White, in a frame of oaks and elms and maples—a sky of Neapolitan blue—mullioned windows where the ivy climbs—the classic calm of Magdalen or Christ's, but very, very little of the bebrief-cased and betortoise-shelled efficiency of Chicago or Columbia—in short, a land flowing with milk and honey, if you will, but peopled, unfortunately, by Philistines. And so the visitor's son, when come of college age, most likely goes to Dartmouth or Ohio Wesleyan, and does not matriculate at Charlottesville.

## II

CLASSES and courses there are, of course, for all and sundry on the college rolls, and many of these there are which the applicant for academic recognition must willy-nilly take. "Tickets" they call them at Virginia. Here the postulant for an arts degree must show Latin or Greek, or both, and a minimum of the mathematics—mercifully a minimum! Unbridled election has never been popular with the professors, who rigidly adhere to the belief that every man should do a certain amount of work that he loathes. Formal discipline, the secondary school educators called this doctrine, until they threw it out, neck and crop. But at Virginia, which till recently led the State universities in the amount of inescapable requirements, formal discipline is a rubic of fast color.

Yet withal, Virginia is not an institution of the higher, or Germanic style, of learning. The library is a commendable piece of architecture, not a great workshop, and the kilowattage consumed in study after midnight is negligible. Session after session the "first-year-men" (*not* freshmen) elect what they fancy easy and

sign up for the remainder they cannot avoid, and dally onward down the primrose path to the everlasting *non-scire*. Year after year they pass out of Cabell Hall, capped and gowned, signed and sealed "bachelors" for life, and few there be whom the white flame of the lust for sapience has seared.

If classroom work is intellectually banal, little more can be said for extra-mural activities. The literary societies, Wash. and Jeff., where once Henry W. Grady and Woodrow Wilson and Oscar Underwood rattled the tympana of the *plebs*, desiccated long ago and have hung on through lack of sufficient vitality to die. Time was when the Mag. found liberal and creditable support from a plethora of commencing authors; now it is always an incubus on the shoulders of two or three forlorn but generous spirits. *Topics* is frankly and properly the organ of athletic activities. *The Virginia Reel* is a college comic, and like all others of its ilk and *unlike* Emerson's *Rhodora*, has no excuse for being.

It were unwise to conclude hastily that this state of affairs is attributable to any defect in the staff of instruction. True, the faculty is small, when compared with those of the larger universities, nor does the list contain many names that are much in the public mouth. The professors at Virginia are too busy boning up their lectures to write many articles for the Sunday Supplement of the *Times*.

But even the sorriest undergrad. has a warm place in his heart for the faculty. He admires even when he does not follow. Dean Page, who is last to shake the hand of many a poor fellow leaving Virginia for cause, is loved even by those he chastens. Five minutes after first hearing President Alderman utter the words "Jeffersonian democracy" I was ready to nominate him for captain and full-back of the All-American College Presidents' Eleven, nor has time altered my opinion. No campus idol ever enjoyed half the popularity of

"Little Doc" Lefevre of the School of Philosophy. Albeit the notes from which he yearly lectures are yellow with age (and rumor has it that one sheet slipped from his hand recently and broke in pieces on the classroom floor), he is one of the most potent antisoporific influences in the University. Men rise early from warm beds in cold rooms to hear him expound the Logos. His annual lecture on the Death of Socrates is an event. Even George Eager, of the Law School, whose favorite mis-quotation is

Tho' he praise me, yet will I bust him,

has not been excluded from all kindly regard. The average Virginia man will do anything for his professors—save study.

### III

To the old-timer returning for Centennial Week in June of last year, the changed physical aspect of the place must have come as a shock.

Something was, lacking, known of yore,  
Some missing, well-remembered thing—  
Carr's Hill, the mud, and Dibert's Corps,  
Old Buzzard Pete, and many more—  
The glamour of the Hotfoot king.

Change smote him at the corner. Here, where student trails have crossed since the founding, a creditable Entrance Building has replaced blowsy Temerance Hall of many memories, and the stile-posts which had erst kept stray cattle off the Long Walk had yielded to a gateway of simple dignity. The more the old-grad gazed, the more his wonder grew. Finally, to convince himself that he was really at Virginia, our Rip probably hunted up the Serpentine Wall, or the nightmare in stone called Brooks' Museum. Failing these, even, he might have reassured himself by recourse to ramshackle Fayerweather Gymnasium, which, among gymnasia, is admittedly *sui generis*.

In the last ten years the trowel and

hammer have been busy. Building has followed new building in steady succession, but still the expansion has not kept pace with the growth of the student body and the advance of the University into new fields of activity. Law and Education, Chemistry and Biology, are all newly and comfortably housed, and adequate quarters for the Medical Department, the especial pride of the University, are projected. It is sometimes bruited that the recent establishment of a chair of architecture was a piece of economy by a canny president and has resulted in the saving of several times the salary in architect's fees.

There are not wanting signs that the priceless bequest of the original, or Jeffersonian, group of buildings is beginning to be appreciated more at its true worth. The newer structures are all in external harmony with the original unit, nor do they suffer in that their classrooms are not the dungeons and cold-storages of the earlier piles. A more enlightened system of janitation (if I may use the word) has come into being with the gradual demise of the race of shirt-sleeved and suspended negro janitors, of venerable age and invariably named Andrew Jackson. It is hard to keep public buildings in good appearance in a land where tobacco-chewing is customary, as any courthouse in the South bears witness, but things are getting better.

More attention likewise is being paid to the grounds. These are of an unusual natural beauty, rolling, set with fine old trees, and surrounded with a ring of modest mountains. The grass is kept more closely trimmed, the hedges clipped, and little formal gardens have been set out between the lawns and ranges. The rocky chasm athwart Minor Hall has been transformed, through the beneficence of an alumnus, into a Greek theatre. Concerts, pageants, and divers *al fresco* assemblies are held here. It contains, in its hermetically sealed wings, the pipes of a great organ, and

the mellow tones of an afternoon recital can be heard on the golf links, when the language permits.

Albeit the externals of Virginia are changed and changing, our alumnus of another day would find that life on Range and Row is not so greatly altered. Men still live, in the main, in order to climb into one or another of the mutually exclusive organizations with which the place abounds. Gumming, or gathering up groups to anathematize work, the football schedule, or anything that is, is still the favorite indoor pastime. Even the indigenous ancient verb, to curl, *i. e.*, to confound a professor by a perfect recitation, is in good repute and current usage, though the act of curling is more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Touching the matters of drinking and gambling at Virginia, much has been said both by the foolish and the wise. Many virtuous but ignorant folk regard the University as a roaring den of iniquity, an institution supported by the worthy taxpayers, for instruction in plain and fancy, ground and lofty, guzzling. Now, no harm can come from speaking honestly. There is drinking at Virginia, and some gambling as well; "history does not tell" when these things were not; and sometimes the most liberal among us must admit that there is over-much. Just such an abuse of liberty occurred after the Virginia-Carolina game of a year ago, and was immediately seized upon by the local prototype of Brother Straton as a pretext for publishing to the four winds the inherent incorrigibility of Virginia, both students and faculty. But it is to the disgust that license always produces among decent men, rather than to the raucous trumpetings of the village Jeremiah, that we attribute our subsequent improvement and hopes for future rectitude.

Be our opinion on the abstract question of drinking what it may, we must admit that many of the most precious memories and traditions of

the place are connected in one way or another with a bottle and contents. In a fashion most puzzling to moralists, a fragrant tale and vinous liquors are rarely divorced. Bacchus tells, or gives rise to, the best stories. It would require a full, rich lifetime to collect and edit the myriad such that hang like a nimbus over Virginia.

Take, in point, the recent case of Blodgett, the Three-Story Man. One winter's night a year or two ago, Blodgett and a circle of friends made merry in a room two flights up. In a good-humored tussle at an open window. Blodgett lost his balance, tumbled out, and came to rest in the snow and a rose-bush. For a long while, such was the Higher Indifference of all present, his absence was not noted. Then: "Where's Blodgett?" "Har, har!" laughed the other party to the tussle. "He fell out of the window."

Somebody sagely called up the hospital, but none thought of going down to succor the fallen. The good-humored fellows crowded to the window in the meanwhile and strove to locate Blodgett. "There he is, by the wall." "No, I see him quite plainly, in the flower-bed."

Then the internes came with a stretcher and bore the still form into a pool room on the ground floor, and stretched it on a table. Another celebration was in progress here, the participants in which were gaily chasing one and all with billiard-cues, loftily indifferent to the fate of Blodgett.

"Silence!" roared the internes. "Haven't you got any respect for the dead?"

But Blodgett was not dead. He speedily recovered from his mishap sufficiently to climb, for some unknown reason, a telegraph-pole, and to be knocked therefrom, by a certain number of volts, into the middle of Water Street. Then, deserting a promising career as balloon ballast, he soberly and successfully entered upon the study of medicine.

The case of Blodgett, I think, is typical of much. There have been many of his kind, or thereabout, at Virginia—men who sowed wild oats and tares in their folly, with a careless hand, but who disappointed their enemies by changing crops in time. I hold no brief for tares, but to those interested in collecting these gramina, I can heartily recommend the Virginia brand.

#### IV

Of what then, O Conscript Fathers, does the invisible higher learning, if any, at Virginia consist? Grounds and buildings, be they ever so beautiful, do not make a university, nor explain the high repute in which the Charlottesville institution is held. Training of a sort, and that valuable, must be obtainable that it may draw through more than a hundred years the best young blood of the South. And youth, though in some things gullible, will not always mistake stones for bread; yet the loyalty of the ten thousand alumni of this most un-collegiate of colleges is axiomatic, in spite of the fact that the diamond-studded belt of athletic prestige has departed from Lambeth Field, to rest alternately at Georgia Tech. and in Danville, Ky.

Perhaps it was a dream of the Founder that Virginia should become a great training ground for democracy, a place where young men, forgetting distinctions of origin, and unmindful, for a space, of the future, might absorb a little of Jefferson's own feelings and convictions about the brotherhood of man. If such were his hope, it has never been realized. Virginia is not democratic, even in the reflexes of daily intercourse. It is rare enough to warrant comment that a student says "Good morning" to another whom he has never formally met; while the cut direct is passed as often on the Lawn as in the tea-room at the Ritz. The prefix "Mr." lingers long between acquaintances.

These things are straws, maybe, but they accurately gauge the direction of the wind. Money and clothes and society badges cause considerable cleavage in undergraduate solidarity.

Some have mightily deplored this condition; others have suffered acutely under it; but to the fortunate many who revel in the liberty that is synonymous with Virginia, it is but a defect of the quality. The very air of the arcades is pungent with forthright freedom. And this blessed heritage of all who enter the Corner gates does much, we trust, to reconcile the Sage on his couch under the pines of Monticello to the democratic shortcomings of his children in the valley.

It is typical of Virginia that for nearly a century it had no president. A Board of Visitors and the faculties of the several departments ran things, until increasing size and a rather lamentable tendency toward standard form resulted in the selection of a head. But the twig had been bent and the tree has always been inclined decidedly in the direction of a wide freedom.

From the beginning the professors might believe what seemed right to them, and might teach the truth as they saw it, without fear and without reproach. In the days when education in this country was almost invariably a special pleader and a secretary, the canker of compulsory religiosity, or of any sort of -ism, never entered Virginia. When he planned his school, Jefferson had looked to the Continent, not to the hidebound seminaries of New England, for a model, and the lineage of our present liberty is thus by Jefferson out of France. With one notable exception, and that during the stress of the late war, this freedom of thought and speech has never been restrained.

As a natural consequence, the student body shares largely in the exercise of self-determination. The undergraduates live where and how they

choose, so long as their conduct is not a public nuisance and an offense to the college. They may elect to work or to loaf and invite their soul, according to the dictates of their own sweet will. Their goings-out and comings-in are not questioned. The faculty disciplines only in extreme cases. Infractions of the code of gentlemanly conduct are handled by a student Honor Committee; in fact, the honor system was developed first at Virginia. The right of assembly and petition is sacred. It was recently exercised and has resulted in a complete change in the method of administering athletic affairs. When it was felt that a proposed student court constituted a threat of dis-

agreeable surveillance, the movement was killed in open meeting.

Fishes that tipple in the deep—beyond the three-mile limit—are not more free than we to work out our own salvation or damnation. Occasional abuses of this liberty have given Virginia a moral black eye, from the days of Poe on down to the present; but we bear up under the undeserved stigma, mindful of what it implies. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. The knowledge that the University first revealed to them their weaknesses and tested out their strength abides always with Virginia men; they

—sing their Alma Genetrix  
Among the willows of the Styx.



## Discoverers

*By Norine Wintrowe*

**T**HERE are adventurous souls who dream strange dreams  
Wherefrom they wake and go upon a quest  
For gold or fame, or countries wild and new,  
Fearless of Fate and halting not for rest.

A man of Genoa built a fleet of ships  
To cross the sea and find an unknown land.  
I too am a discoverer. Through the dark  
I walked alone, until I touched your hand.



**R**ELIGION is a man using a divining rod. Philosophy is a man using a pick and shovel.





# Agglutination Test for Americanos

By Leslie L. Jones

**A**RE you really 100% American? Would you like to find out just how well you measure up to the fine standard of American Manhood? Gauge yourself by the tests given below. It is quite easy. First, you take a piece of paper and a pencil. Then you ask yourself the first question. If an affirmative answer is forthcoming, if you are a member of one of the churches named, write down the figure "eleven." Continue with the other tests in the same manner, each time adding the number indicated whenever you can lay your hand on the Holy Scriptures and truthfully reply "Yes." Having searched your inner self in the light of each question, add up the figures you now find on the piece of paper. The resultant sum equals the intensity of your Americanism, as expressed in terms of percentage.

1. If you are a member of the Baptist (Hard- or Soft-shell), Methodist, United Brethren, or Presbyterian Churches.....add 11
2. For each membership in one of the chivalrous orders—Knights of Pythias, Knights of the Macabees, Knights of Honour, Knights of Columbus.....add 1
3. For each membership in one of the patriotic zoological societies—Elks, Eagles, Moose, Owls, Lions .....add 2
4. For each membership in a society of natural history—Woodmen of the World, Foresters of America, United Order of Ancient Druids, Imperial Order of Red Men..add 1
5. For each membership in a society of belles lettres—I. O. O. F., W. C. T. U., D. A. R., Y. W.

- C. A., Jr. O. U. A. M., G. A. R., Y. M. C. A., T. P. A., U. C. T., B. Y. P. U.....add 3
6. For each membership in the American Legion, the Ku Klux Klan, the Rotary Club, or the Lord's Day Alliance.....add 13
7. If, when referring to citizens of foreign countries, you make use of such terms as Frogs, Huns, Wops, Bohunks .....add 1
8. If you are fond of the simple, nourishing dishes served in the Childs' restaurants.....add 1
9. If you consider Dr. Frank Crane a greater philosopher than Socrates, Kant, or Voltaire.....add 1
10. If you have never heard of these foreigners .....add 2
11. If you enthuse over baseball..add 5
12. If you buy phonograph records of jazz orchestras, marimba bands, or Pietro Deiro.....add 1
13. If you are a regular reader of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Success*, or the *American Magazine* .....add 1
14. If the walls of your home are hung with Perry Pictures...add 1
15. If one of these is "The Angelus," "Sir Galahad," or "Saint Cecilia" .....add 2
16. If your taste for poetry runs to Walt Mason, Edgar Guest, or Robert W. Service.....add 1
17. If your favorite dessert is apple pie dressed with a slab of American cream cheese.....add 1
18. If you possess a copy of "Heart Throbs" or a copy of "More Heart Throbs" .....add 1
19. If you contributed to "Heart Throbs" or to "More Heart

- Throbs" .....add 2
20. If your heart throbs excessively when John McCormack sings "Mother Machree," "Killarney," or "Where the River Shannon Flows" .....add 1
21. If you own one of the 9,000,000 copies of Harold Bell Wright's novels .....add 1
22. If you vote in all municipal, State, and national elections..add 1
23. If you wear a button on the lapel of your coat.....add 1
24. If you start the day with Toasted Corn Flakes, Puffed Rice, Cream of Wheat, Force, Krumbles, or Shredded Wheat Biscuits...add 1
25. If Bud Fisher is your favorite humorist .....add 1
26. If your home shelters an automatic piano .....add 1
27. If you belong to a Christmas Savings Club or believe that Debs ought still to be in Atlanta .....add 1
28. If you wear a flower on Mothers' Day .....add 1
29. If you are a student in a correspondence school .....add 1
30. If you stand and cheer when the orchestra plays "Dixie".....add 5
31. If you believe that Woodrow was deceived at Paris.....add 1
32. If you visited Niagara Falls on your wedding journey.....add 1
33. If you consider Billy Sunday a powerful force for good....add 1
34. If you believe the United States won the late war.....add 23



## A Lady Walked in Ilium

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

A LADY walked in Ilium  
But that is long ago,  
And whether she was sad o' nights  
Who is there to know?

And whether she discovered too  
That loving has no ease  
When there is a golden moon  
Swinging in the trees.

Who is there to tell me  
Whether even yet  
There is one night that lady  
Cannot quite forget?



# Finis

By Luis Muñoz Marín

## I

CASIMIRO MELENDEZ sat in one of the plaza cafés, toying angrily with a thick tumbler full of vermouth and cracked ice. With the majority of men, he was no coward and no hero. When the greedy fingers of the *Comité de Reclutamiento* had clutched him by the broad, nervous shoulders, he had cursed magnificently, and assured himself that he was glad to go. "Damn those rebels!" he had shouted to himself, not knowing whether he damned them because they were robbing him of his bureaucratic leisure, or because they were the enemies of law and order and His Excellency President Jiménez.

It was a shame, though, that poets should be compelled to fight the battles of politicians! Think of the incalculable amount of song that had gone to feed the worms because its potential authors had been sent to a premature death by scheming *politicastros*! In the present trouble alone, four poets had already perished on the respectable, and God knows how many on the disreputable, side of the struggle. Their names had passed across Casimiro's mind—Pérez, Carballo, Pí, López-Hartmann. A superior smile—faint, slightly painful, as superior smiles should be—had showed itself on his face. Good fellows, no doubt; but after all . . . from the literary standpoint that is . . . better. . . . Yes, why not? . . . Better at rest, silent. What verse!

This had reminded him that every important period of bloodshed—and the present one seemed to be by far the most important—had made its poet who

automatically passed into the text-books and the retentive organs of statesmen and señoritas. The idea of entering these sanctuaries in triumph flattered Melendez; but he smiled with condescension at the naïve work of those that were already there. Surely his work was not for that company either. Ah, but the text-books of the future, the statesmen and señoritas of the future! Progress, you know.

This had settled his decision to be glad that he was going to fight for his country's good. During the short period of training in an outlying village, he had frequently come to the Capital and to his favorite café to utter boisterous, patriotic, brilliant and profoundly lyrical things, and, in short, to live what would afterward be called "the last riotous and beautiful days of the great poet in the beloved city of his birth." If they did not call them that he would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they were fools. Oh, but he would be dead, of course! True. Well. . . .

But now as he sat in the café, alone, for it was the middle of the morning, sipping one vermouth after another, reading and rereading López-Hartmann's last letter from the fighting area, his enthusiasm was at a low ebb. He had persuaded himself that he sought death and the fame that would go with it; that one hundred years of this life of obscurity and sordid even if leisurely bread-winning was not worth one hour of glorious death.

Poor López-Hartmann's letter spoke of yellow fever, unceasing sniping, the total absence of a war code; of killing, killing, killing, continuously, by ones, by twos, by battalions; and all without the

large battle rhythms or fierce personal combats one usually associates with military glory; without more drama than that involved in countless bits of glass falling from a broken pane. "I despair of seeing Cartago again. When one is a coward the fever gets him; when one is brave and exposes oneself, the rebel snipers get him. There is no quarter. Veterans of many revolutions do not hesitate to cross themselves openly."

What Melendez had read of other revolutionary crises was indeed different. He shrank with what he believed to be fastidiousness from the thing that López-Hartmann painted; told himself with a certain literary snobbishness that it must be still worse, as López-Hartmann's command of words had always been rather limited. He glanced from the letter to that morning's *Gazette Official*, which he occasionally bought, for the sake of the casualty list. López-Hartmann had been right as to his fate. Melendez attributed his own despondency to the realization of the impossibility of producing a patriotic masterpiece out of such raw material (his muse did not run to realism); but his instinct of conservation could be kept subdued only by the severest efforts of his dignity.

And tomorrow he was to leave! It was death. Besides wishing it, he had known it before—sometimes. Now he felt it; the ashen savor of it was on his lips. A sense of utter futility invaded him. Fame dwindled. All things dwindled, excepting, of course, the God in whom he had never believed. *He* increased.

Melendez rose, flung a coin on the table, went out, and let the twisted streets shape his course at their will for an hour, at the end of which he found himself in front of the small municipal library. It was a place he had frequented quite assiduously during the past few years. Not a bad spot to drown some hours in. The chance to divert his thoughts was a welcome one. He would revisit the sepulchral pages of forgotten poets. In his present mood

he was certain he would join the innumerable host some day; and it was with a very justifiable pride that he remembered that forgotten poets wrote great lines, now and then.

Of course he would have to chat literarily with Señorita Infanzón, the small-pox-pitted librarian. That was a *contratiempo*. She was pathetic. She looked, breathed, was unutterable loneliness. Hers, however, was not the sort of loneliness one finds and loves in trees and rivers. It was rather that of a little unsociable animal devoid of ferocity. Her personality was one raw call for sympathy; yet one found it difficult to imagine its returning any it might get. She was too weak for that. She wrote bad poems, wofully bad ones, and Casimiro remembered with no pleasure at all how she admired him. Being printed was, to Señorita Infanzón, the acme of achievement.

For an instant he thought of not entering. Giving up his forgotten poets at this time was hard, however. And then, he reflected, even she would help to banish his brown mood. Anything to banish that for a while!

## II

It was eleven o'clock. At that hour of the morning the library was invariably empty. Casimiro walked in with unaccustomed briskness, and made for the half-hidden favorite corner.

At first the librarian did not see beyond the blue and red uniform; but as the same code that directs that one wear hats in the streets demands that one take them off in libraries, the poet did so, thereby unshading the unmistakable brown eyes, the straight, insistent nose, the rather indistinctive chin.

"Señor Melendez! . . . er . . . where have you been all these days?" Then, realizing her stupidity, "Oh, of course, *en el ejército*. But just training? Yes? . . . I hope just training. . . ."

Casimiro Melendez delved down into his heart for a smile, and yanked it to his lips.

"Yes," he said, "I am leaving very soon, very soon. . . ." This would never do. Better literature a thousand times. "Is everything well over here, Señorita?"

His voice rang pleasant. He had made an effort to make it ring so. Dislike the little old maid he did, for no particular reason, of course. She spread an atmosphere of unlovely gloom about her. But he pitied her, too.

Presently he heard her eternally desolate monotone:

"As ever, Señor Melendez, as ever. Life, as you know, is always smooth for me. I am here all day. Nothing happens. I read sometimes. There are some good authors there, not many." Her thin, knotted fingers pointed at the gaudy bookshelves. Her tone was half embarrassed, half sheepishly superior.

Casimiro found nothing to say. He pitied her again, with the passing sort of pity one gives to somebody else's trampled toe.

"Yes," he agreed after a moment, not knowing if he was entering into literary or personal grounds; hoping, if at all, for the former; "not many."

During the short silence that ensued, Casimiro thought of nothing in particular. Señorita Infanzón thought of Casimiro. He was the only author she knew. So far as she was aware, the only one she had ever seen. To one writing bad poems this state of affairs is golden. Before the Presence she felt an emotion akin to worship, to awe, to envy. Besides, Casimiro's big frame and the glittering symbols of ferocity with which it was bedecked dominated her.

"The old corner is intact?" He broke the silence with the familiar query.

"Intact. No one ever goes there. No one has been near it since you ceased coming. Oh, Señor Melendez, it has . . . it has been so dull! No one to talk to; no one to exchange ideas with; no one. . . ."

He looked at her in some surprise; then:

"Oh, come, Señorita, surely it is not so bad as . . ." His words died away

from his lips, having in reality nothing to express.

"Oh, you do not know, you do not know," her tearful monotone hobbled on: "Your life has change, color, atmosphere. Now you are going to the hideous fight. It's hideous. Uh! the accounts they bring of it! But I tell you, Señor Melendez, sometimes I think that . . . that it is better than. . . . Oh, *está bien!*" she ended despondently.

"No," protested the poet in unbelievable earnestness; please not about *that*. I came here to get away from it. Well, there is the old corner!"

He walked over. The favorites were all there, unread, undusted even. The names on their backs were like the graves of honest folk—meaningless to the public's eye. Few had a thought for these old titles, successes, perhaps, of a short season. The disquieting thought that soon he too would be buried there returned to Casimiro Melendez.

Señorita Infanzón, as of yore, brought him out of his reverie. A few soiled sheets of paper rustled in her hand.

"I . . . er. . . . You are so kind, Señor Melendez," she stammered. "I have some new poems . . . verses. Your opinion is, of course. . . ."

"Valueless," he interrupted.

"Oh, no," melancholically horrified; "oh, no. Your opinions are invaluable to *me*. In this monotonous existence that eats me away, really . . . you are like . . . like sunshine. A man of your genius must mean . . . much to my poor drab existence."

He pitied her yet again. She disgusted him. He saw a crust of bread soaked in tears.

"My genius . . ." he muttered doubtfully. Under any other circumstances the epithet would have sent him home reeling with glory.

"Oh, I know you are modest. That is something I . . . admire in you. I admire modest geniuses. If I had had your success, I am sure I could not be modest. But, of course, why think of



that, why think of that! Success to my life! My poor life!"

Casimiro was on the verge of screaming. His nerves were taut. Why did this woman insist on reminding him of the miserableness of her existence? Did she not *look* it hard enough? Why had he come, anyway? Should he not have *known*? These days his head was not serving him as it should. Trying to extricate himself from the purgatory of his own predicament, he had tricked himself into the hell of the petty woman's. *Diablo!* Why did he not want to think of the scurrilous revolution? Had he not been content, even glad, to go once the *Comité de Reclutamiento* had thrust him into the blue and red? Was he not the one that sought Death and was to take Fame by the forelock and bend it to his service with his last breath?

He could not understand himself. He was insane. He felt López-Hartmann's letter in his pocket. "*I despair of seeing Cartago again. When one is a coward the fever gets him; when one is brave and exposes oneself the rebel snipers get him. There is no quarter. Veterans of many revolutions do not hesitate to cross themselves openly.*"

No. He was not insane. Death. . .

Her scrawl was under his nose. The uncertain, startled, sword-of-Damocles look peculiar to failures lurked in her eyes. Casimiro found himself looking into them steadily. What was in this woman's soul, beside the bad verse and the lamentations? Could it be that it was absolutely devoid of real humanity? Could she cook? Could she stroke children's hair? Could a healthy emotion, trivial or deep, overtake it, grasp it, get into it, fill it? He wondered.

Suddenly he saw something in those colorless eyes he had never seen in them before. It was a longing, a pathetic but tremendous longing for something other than to get her name into print. For a few moments the idea refused to shape itself within Casimiro's consciousness. In a flash it did, startlingly.

Could it be . . . could it be that she loved him?

The bunch of manuscript slipped from her fingers to the floor. Her whole shriveled soul was in her face. Yes, it was that. She loved him. Casimiro felt the thing envelop him, paradoxically clammy and warm. He pitied her, now almost like an equal in distress. Poor Señorita Infanzón! Another tragedy, this time a poignant one, to further mangle the slender gift of life that had been hers!

From the rock-bottom of his heart he pitied her. Whatever was unvitiated in him was at that moment turned into sympathy for this little bit of a meaningless woman who loved him. Then, in an instant, swift, full, inspiring, he saw the light. He would make her supremely happy for one day and fill the remainder of her life with a glorious widowhood. He had to report at the railroad station in the morning. Within three or four days he was certain to be in the seditious area where the fever got the cowards and the snipers got the brave men. With a fierce, steady resolve, he clasped her tightly by the almost fleshless shoulders.

"I know," he panted; "I have known all the time," he lied; "and I love you too. I leave tomorrow. I want you. I want you . . . us to be happy. Will you marry me today, now, this instant?"

She whimpered a little; then relaxed, half-fainting, into his arms, overcome.

Casimiro groped for her first name. "Carmita!" he succeeded.

### III

As they left the cura's house an hour later the streets resounded with shouts and screams and songs. Carmita and Casimiro Melendez were too happy, the one with her lover, the other one with his greatness of heart, to bother about learning the news that the revolution had ended in a peace without victory, the revolutionary chief having been invited to enter the Cabinet of the Republic.

# Gran'ma

By Parkhurst Whitney

## I

LIFE used gran'ma shabbily and permitted her to die shabbily. After seventy-odd years, most of them years of drudgery and self-denial, a lingering disease took hold of her and for weeks she was no more than a mindless organism. When she was dead I came home from the nearby city and went to where she lay in the cold room that had once been bright with her beloved geraniums.

I felt no grief. The horror of her lingering sickness had been stronger than sorrow, and so as I stood before her I was thinking not so much of her as that I would like to touch her. I put a forefinger on her pale cheek and received an impression of cold wax. I left the room in that same mood, thinking only that those days were ended when her moans, as regular as the inhalation and exhalation of her breath, filled the house with dread. I was thinking that she was dead and that that thing which was herself, her spirit, her personality was no more. There I was wrong. Gran'ma was shortly in her grave, but her soul goes marching on.

I run hurriedly over the outline of her early history. It was the common heritage of American children in the early part of the nineteenth century—life on the farm. She, the eldest daughter and therefore her mother's hired girl. Eight younger children to nurse and cook for. Hired men and threshers and pig killers as incidental burdens, the day beginning before sunrise and ending long after sundown

with preparations for another day. Few books and an occasional newspaper edited by some verbose slanderer for the sole purpose of vilifying another verbose slanderer. An indifferent schooling, which, however, enabled her to become an amazingly proficient speller; she amused me as a child by spelling words backward as rapidly as I could give them to her. For recreation the spelling bee, visiting, church and the camp meeting where ignorant parsons bedevilled young and old with fearsome claptrap about the impending end of the world and the certainty of an eternity in a superheated hereafter for all who were not washed in the blood of the Lamb. No dancing, of course. No card playing.

It is a bleak, unlovely picture in my mind, but I don't mean to give the impression that gran'ma found it so. She spoke occasionally of the hard labor of those early years, but she criticized her early environment not at all; indeed, throughout her later life she was always trying to recreate its superficial aspect. No doubt she was grateful that the training of her girlhood hardened her muscles for the life of drudgery that was to be her lot, and was not concerned, as I am, with the hardening of her spirit.

For that, as I see now, was the significant result. Her chief resource became work, physical activity. There was no serenity about her, no gentleness, no mellow, reasonable philosophy. She was intolerant, against things, hostile without reason and immune to reason where she was hostile. Bold against things she hated, but fearful of death.

Generous with her cookery, her greatest vanity, but small in her judgments and opinions. I used to think that gran'ma had affected only my life and the lives of one or two others; now I seem to see her spirit in the background of many American manifestations.

She married twice and her second husband died in the village to which she had moved after the second venture. There was a little money, but some Yankee merchant smelled it out and it disappeared quickly in so-called investments. After that the drab refuge of respectable women—the boarding house.

Now she comes out of the years and stands vividly before me—a little gray now; shoulders slightly bent; hands hard and knuckly; the sleeves of her gingham wrapper rolled above powerful forearms corrugated with big veins. She is cooking, always cooking; stopping occasionally to wipe the steam from her spectacles and the sweat from her wrinkled forehead, but eternally bending over the cook stove frying chops, frying steak, frying pancakes, for the riff-raff that flocked to her cheap and groaning board. For there was nothing of the decayed gentlewoman pose about gran'ma. She was of the soil and she liked its flavor and any peddling roustabout, any grimy mechanic from the village tin factory could find a place at her table.

The result was a cross-section of democracy, a voracious rabble that knew that gran'ma's cooking was her vanity and that the hidden spring could be touched with praise. So they praised her loudly and gran'ma was gratified and rewarded and bent lower over the cook stove and turned off more pies and pancakes and second helpings. How she remained solvent I can't imagine; her standard charge for her glutting meals, room included, was three dollars and a half a week.

I have said that hers was not a restful spirit, and, indeed, it couldn't be. Her energy was phenomenal, but she found expression for it all. She was always moving, always in motion; even as she stood at the hot stove her hands

were busy with the meats and vegetables, with her spectacles, with the beads of sweat on her forehead. Then there were dishes to wash, beds to make, floors to scrub, floors to sweep, lamps to fill, tables to set, meals to plan. Her days were no shorter than those days of her childhood on the farm. This routine she followed for nearly thirty years and finally died of it. Good Lord! why shouldn't women of today be in a mood of rebellion? But I wonder if gran'ma would lead them were she alive?

After the housework had been attended to there were her chickens, her flowers and her garden. They were her hobbies and through them she recreated in a measure the atmosphere of the farm. She set great store by her chickens and she was always experimenting with no great success with new meals and mashies in the hope of increasing the output of eggs. Every night before sundown they were religiously released from the chicken yard and permitted to scatter about her lawn for exercise and stray forage.

It was a custom that greatly aided gran'ma in achieving the illusion of life on the farm, and the illusion was strengthened by her habits with flowers. She loved flowers and fruit trees, but the sense of their artistic or even practical arrangement she had not at all. A plant was a plant and a tree was a tree and each was to be stuck in the ground wherever fancy dictated or space permitted. As a result her rather scraggly lawn was cluttered and tortured with stray trees, plum trees, apple trees, cherry trees—most of them stunted and unproductive because they had been planted in sterile soil or in perpetual shade. Elsewhere the lawn was decorated with nasturtiums growing out of rusty tomato cans, old crocks, even out of the cracked and discarded firepot of the furnace, an ugly, scarred contrivance that even the brilliant nasturtiums could not subdue.

Gran'ma seldom sat down to contemplate her handiwork. Her pleasure was in creation, and had her years been

extended, had the cook stove not burned her, too, at last, she would no doubt have created a tangled wildwood at her own doorstep.

## II

RELIGION was no solace to gran'ma, no refuge in her weariness. She seldom attended Sunday morning service, because the midday dinner was a gorging ceremony and there were chickens to be dressed and dumplings to be made for the inevitable fricassee. Besides, the faith in which gran'ma was raised was not devised to console the weary and the heavy laden. Her religious experience was concerned with a series of emotional orgies, punctuated with prophecies of the imminent end of the world and a fiery bath through eternity for the unrepentant. It was difficult even for the repentant in her faith to feel absolutely certain of a happy hereafter, and altogether the dogma was too much for gran'ma, as it was too much for others of her generation.

Of course she didn't openly rebel. She didn't even suspect that the itinerant parsons who came and went year after year were not all ordained by God to speak the pure milk of the Word. She simply stayed away from church, kept out of earshot of their grisly preachments and tried to forget.

One heritage of such a faith was an unreasoning fear of death. Gran'ma should have contemplated death serenely, but her savage religious teachers had done their work too well. Hard as her life was, she seemed to find it a prettier thing to face than the sombre hereafter that had been created for her, and by her kind. She clung to life long after disease had destroyed her conscious self and while that self lived she never spoke of her inevitable death nor permitted it to be mentioned in her presence.

In this passive rebellion against an unlovely sectarianism gran'ma cultivated a love for the primitive theatre; the barnstorming troupes, the minstrels, the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Show

could always count on her for patronage. But it was entirely characteristic that her incipient liberalism did not extend to cards, because she, herself, did not like to play.

Some men I know like to believe that the prohibition amendment lately added to our Constitution was put there by a sly trick; that a handful of busybodies, a great deal of money and a venal Congress defrauded an overwhelming majority of citizens of the right to drink and get drunk in an entirely lawful manner. I join these men in mourning a pleasant custom, but my memories of gran'ma don't permit me to fall into the errors of their reasoning. It was her strong spirit that defeated the demon rum and the fight began long years ago. Gran'ma was a willing slave to work, but prohibition was her passion. How she would have joyed in the victory! She would have had no qualms about the ethics of the anti-saloon forces. She would have exulted in the slaughter of bootleggers and deaths from wood alcohol.

In gran'ma was the fanatical quality, the bitter intensity of the zealots that made national prohibition possible. Such women as she bedevilling the typical State legislator and Congressman—the passage of the amendment is no mystery to me. Gran'ma believed that one drink of rum started a man on the road to perdition, no effort of the will being able to stem the descent. All traffickers in rum were villains and the apologist for the social libation was no better. Since billiards and pool were customarily played in saloons she never could be made to admit that they were, in themselves, innocent diversions. She would admit no extenuating circumstances for the demon rum. She ran at him from every side, compromising not at all, attacking always, never taking the defensive.

Prohibition was really gran'ma's faith. If she went seldom to church she never, however weary, failed to attend the monthly meetings of the W. C. T. U. I remember well the regularity of her attendance, because for a

very real reason in her mind I was forced to go with her.

Once in my youth I was overcome at a revival by the groaning and snuffing, by the "Amen's" of the penitent brethren and particularly by the lurid picture of the hot eternity that awaited me, an impenitent. I was led to the mourners' bench snuffing with the rest, and presently the secretary of the Y. M. C. A. —from which I had been suspended recently for some ungentlemanly behavior —was patting me on the back and assuring me of a prompt return to the fold. I was, it would seem, saved, and for a few days I did feel better and rather hoped for some earthly recognition of my sanctity. Not from gran'ma, however. She had been through too many such storms. She was outspokenly doubtful of the permanent effect of my emotional upheaval, and her suspicions were correct, I admit. But I contrast her attitude at that time with her attitude when I walked to the platform at a temperance meeting and signed my name to the death warrant of ales, wines and liquors and then walked back to her with a white ribbon in my button-hole.

Gran'ma's faith in her cause was so profound that she could believe the impulsive act of a ten-year-old boy had settled forever his conduct in the presence of the enemy. Poor gran'ma! I can't wish that I had kept the faith, but I hope she never found out.

### III

GRAN'MA failed to profit materially in her long, hard life, but what concerns me more is the corresponding failure to profit in the less tangible ways of the spirit. I except the abandonment of her harsh religion, though she did not so much cast it away as absurd and archaic as simply flee from its terrors. Hers was the age of amazing mechanical development. She had seen the steam engine supplant the stage coach and the telephone and telegraph outstrip the slow post. These she accepted and used in a limited way, but she seemed not

to see in them a promise of greater things. Only in a half willing spirit did she allow machinery to simplify her domestic tasks; throughout her life her chief tools were her strong arms.

She did not so much fail to understand what was happening in the world about her as refuse to try to understand. Before she died men were soaring in primitive flying machines and Marconi had surpassed the telephone and telegraph as she had seen those inventions surpass the stage coach. Yet she would not accept them. I remember well trying to explain to her the principles of wireless. At least I conveyed the idea that men were communicating without wires. Gran'ma swept the idea from her as she would kick a stray cat from her porch. The visitor was unwelcome. Out it went, vigorously propelled.

"There's no such thing," she said. "Don't talk so."

I assured her that wireless was in use that very day.

"There's no such thing," she repeated. "There can't be. Don't talk to me about such things."

That was final. Communication without wires was taboo, like death.

### IV

GRAN'MA's laborious days seem to have run on forever, and I suspect that I am doing likewise. There was an end of a sort, which I have told. She died and passed along to her descendants a house and lot of no great value, a few debts and rich memories of herself. Whether there is an inspiring moral in her life of industry I can't say. She was industry itself for seventy-odd years and the reward was a gnarled body, poverty and a miserable death. I don't mean to imply a lack of regard for gran'ma in this aspect. Looking back I see nothing humiliating in the memory of her sweating over her cook stove, turning off mountains of pancakes for her ravenous boarders. I see, rather, an old Spartan. She sought no life of ease. She asked no special favors. She was no parasite. But con-



sidering the result, does all that mean anything?

I turn again to her spiritual qualities, and there, I think, I find something significant. What did not please gran'ma she would have none of. What could not be adjusted to her philosophy she put away from her, not with the weak gesture of resignation, but with active hostility. Generous in many ways, but incredibly uncharitable toward what she opposed. She could match my own

childish rages and stick out her tongue and yah-yah with maddening derision at what did not square with her opinion. She would have hung a witch in an earlier day and shot a bootlegger in a later day with great satisfaction and no strain on the conscience. Hers was a sturdy, intolerant, hating spirit that survived the dissolution of her mortal body. There, I think, is the meaning of her life. She is the gran'ma of America.



## Encounter

*By George O'Neil*

AH, well, this much I know, this much is true  
 There was but little we could say or do.  
 You knew there was a flame and warmed your hands,  
 And I . . . am curious of all strange lands.

You did not see the fire that burnt at last,  
 And there were walls for me and doors held fast.  
 But we have tried; you with your lonely eyes,  
 And I, because of sadness, otherwise.

And though the flame flared eagerly and bright,  
 There was too deep a loneliness to light;  
 And in the end it could have done no good  
 To turn again because we understood.



THE worst thing that can happen to a man is to be some woman's last chance. The worst thing that can happen to a woman is to be some man's first.



THE difference between life and drama is that life tries hard to get people into situations and drama tries hard to get them out of them.



# The Gay Night Life of New York

By Charles G. Shaw

**SCENE:** *A supper restaurant.*  
**TIME:** 11:30 P. M. and there-  
after.

## CHARACTERS

Sixty men with sweet ones.  
Sixty sweet ones with men.  
Thirty-eight men without sweet ones.  
One cigarette girl.  
Seven busy waiters.  
Twenty-one idle waiters.  
One headwaiter.  
Two second headwaiters.  
Three third headwaiters.  
Five musicians.  
Nondescript groups of business negotia-  
tors, débutante parties, etc., etc.

## CIGARETTE GIRL

Cigars, cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes.

**SEVENTEEN MEN WITH SWEET ONES**  
Do you really love me?

**TWENTY-NINE MEN WITHOUT SWEET  
ONES**

As soon as the music starts, I'll ask  
her to dance.

## SEVEN BUSY WAITERS

Coming. Right away.

## ONE HEADWAITER

Bohn schoir. How manee?

**VOICE FROM DÉBUTANTE PARTY**  
I think Mr. Belasco is so realistic.

**TWENTY-SEVEN MEN WITH SWEET  
ONES**

How about a drink? I've got a flask.

**FIVE MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES**  
Let's go around to that other joint.

## TWO SECOND HEADWAITERS

Twelve dollars, please. Keep it under  
your napkin.

## CIGARETTE GIRL

Cigars, cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes.

**TWENTY-SEVEN SWEET ONES**  
That's enough, dear.

**VOICE FROM PARTY OF BUSINESS  
NEGOTIATORS**

Vell, I zay it's too much. T'ink vat  
you can liff on in Vrance.

**THREE THIRD HEADWAITERS**  
(*Yawning.*) Aw-w-w-w-w-w-w.

**NINE MEN WITH SWEET ONES**  
Have you heard the one about the  
widow and the kangaroo?

(*The five musicians play a fox-trot.*)

**TWENTY-NINE MEN WITHOUT SWEET  
ONES**

Damn!

## ONE HEADWAITER

Ver' sorry, sir. Efery table reserv'.

## CIGARETTE GIRL

Cigars, cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes.

**EIGHTEEN MEN WITH SWEET ONES**  
Who was that bird you bowed to?

**EIGHTEEN MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES**  
Wonder who the devil that girl is.

## BUSINESS NEGOTIATOR

I tell you it's the soundest proposition  
ever. Here! Have another drink.

## ONE SWEET ONE

Do be careful. That man saw you

kiss me and he's a friend of my husband.

## SEVEN BUSY WAITERS

Two glasses of orange juice, quart of White Rock and sugar.

## NINETEEN MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

Let's call up { Constance  
Gladys  
Dorothy  
Mildred  
Helen

## TWENTY-TWO SWEET ONES

Yes, dear. Cork-tipped.

## ONE DÉBUTANTE

Make mine stronger this time. The last was only half gin.

## CIGARETTE GIRL

One Bock panatella? Seventy-five cents, please.

## FIFTY-SEVEN MEN WITH SWEET ONES

Don't pour out the ginger ale and bring a spoon.

## SEVEN SWEET ONES

You know, dear, I *must* be home by six.

## BUSINESS NEGOTIATOR

What do you say to a thousand shares? No, I insist—I'll pay the check.

## ONE IDLE WAITER

I don't wait on dees table!

## THIRTY-ONE MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

I'll bet that guy with the goatee is a Federal Agent.

## EIGHTEEN SWEET ONES

Isn't that a homely woman in the ermine wrap?

## ONE SECOND HEADWAITER

Sure, it's safe. Came straight from Canada.

## MALE MEMBER OF DÉBUTANTE PARTY

Afraid I must be going. Have to get up early tomorrow.

THIRTY-FOUR MEN WITH SWEET ONES  
I love you. Good gin, isn't it?

## SEVENTEEN MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

Wonder what time the cigarette girl gets off.

## ONE THIRD HEADWAITER

Good evening, Mr. Krautsburger! S-s-s-st! Ringside table for Mr. Krautsburger.

## ONE IDLE WAITER

I get you change for five dollair.  
(*Disappears for remainder of night.*)

## CIGARETTE GIRL

Cigars, cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes.

## ONE MAN WITH SWEET ONE

How about Atlantic City?

## THIRTY-ONE SWEET ONES

I told him never to call me up again. The fresh thing!

## SIXTEEN MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

Not like the old days, eh? Remember that dump with the sawdust on the floor?

## ONE SECOND HEADWAITER

We geeve beeg carnival on twenty-feeftth of thees month. Tickets, seex dollair. Ver' fine partee.

## ONE MAN WITH SWEET ONE

Who, Cohen? He's a bum.

## VOICE FROM BUSINESS NEGOTIATOR'S PARTY

Any fren' of Harry Blooker's fren' of mine. He's genelman and my fren'.

## EIGHTEEN SWEET ONES

No, dear. He's only a boy I used to know in Chicago.

## THIRTEEN MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

Is that coon place in West Fifty-something Street still going?

## FOUR MEN WITH SWEET ONES

If he comes over here, I'll tell him where to get off!

## SEVEN IDLE WAITERS

I tell your waiter. He be here right away.

## THREE SWEET ONES

Who was that red-haired girl you were with the night before last? Think she's all hell, doesn't she?

## ONE THIRD HEADWAITER

I'll get you some for seventy-five a case. Write your address here.

*(The five musicians play.)*

## SIX MEN WITH SWEET ONES

Who do you think you're bumpin' into?

## EIGHT SWEET ONES

Say! You're steppin' all over my feet.

## TWENTY-ONE MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

The air in here would gag a buzzard.

## ONE IDLE WAITER

Aw, I can't be everywhere at onct.

## CIGARETTE GIRL

Cigars, cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes.

## BUSINESS NEGOTIATOR

Damn that music!

## TWENTY-FOUR SWEET ONES

Why don't they open a window?

## TWENTY-FOUR OTHER SWEET ONES

We're in an awful draught here.

## ONE MAN WITH SWEET ONE

Nine eighty! I won't pay it! Sead the headwaiter!

## THIRTY-NINE MEN WITH SWEET ONES

Keep the change.

## THREE SWEET ONES

Say! That's the third time you've upset your drink over me.

## TWENTY-ONE SWEET ONES

Let's go to that place that stays open all night.

## TWENTY-ONE MEN WITH SWEET ONES

Hey, waiter! The check.

## CIGARETTE GIRL

Cigars, cigarettes. Cigars, cigarettes.

## THIRTY-EIGHT MEN WITHOUT SWEET ONES

Hell!



## Basilisks

*By S. Michael*

EVERY day for a week now  
I have gone to the zoo,  
And, for a full five minutes,  
I have looked the basilisk  
Straight in the eye.  
Tonight I shall not fear  
Your steady gaze, beloved!



# Holiday

By S. N. Behrman and J. K. Nicholson

## I

SHE had gone to bed that Saturday night in a mood of thrilled expectancy not unlike a child's, promised, on the morrow, a journey to a distant city—a sortie into the unknown, the enchanting. It was a sweltering August night, but it was not the heat that kept Emma awake. She was too excited to sleep.

Tomorrow was the great day, the day she had been anticipating for weeks. Emma was going on the Sunday excursion to Michigan City, a sandy resort on the lower end of Lake Michigan, known universally throughout Indiana by the alluring title, "the Coney Island of the West." For fear of being late, Emma had set her battered alarm clock for five, although the excursion train was not scheduled to pass through Knightsville until 6:48.

It had been a rather hard day for Emma. Friends of the Washburns, motoring through Knightsville on their way to Chicago, had stopped off for dinner and there had been a great deal of extra work for her to do. The Washburns had no other hired girl and Emma, besides helping with the dinner, had to wait on table and "do" the mountain of extra dishes after the departure of the visitors.

These visitors were held in great esteem by the Washburns: in the first place, they lived in Chicago, and in the second, they owned quite an expensive car. When the Washburns made their semi-annual trips to Chi-

cago they were invariably entertained by the motoring urbanites. So there had been great preparations for even this brief visit. Mrs. Washburn had been unusually exigent and irritable, so that when Emma, finally through with her work, had come upstairs to her tiny room underneath the eaves of the Washburn home, she was thoroughly exhausted.

Turning restlessly on the narrow bed in the close little room Emma tried to imagine what Michigan City would be like. In the very sound of the two words there was magic! In all her life—she was eighteen—she had never been to a place larger than Knightsville. She was born on a farm, nine miles from town. Until she was fifteen she had attended the consolidated school there and would have gone on but she was needed on the farm to help her mother. When Emma's younger sister, Mabel, got old enough, she took Emma's place and Emma came to Knightsville to work. When she first saw it, the town appealed to her as a caldron of gaiety. There were shops, electric lighted streets, people. One went to moving-pictures, to parties, to dances—in short, one led a varied and complicated existence.

Emma found being with the Washburns very pleasant, indeed. In comparison with the heavy drudgery of farm work her job was quite easy. She had to keep the house tidy, to prepare and serve the meals, to take care of the Washburn children. Mrs. Washburn thought Emma a quiet, well-meaning girl enough, but a bit



slow at her tasks. Indeed, Emma was given to dreaming dreams. Through her mind, while she pottered about in the kitchen or dusted the front parlor, there floated an indeterminate succession of pictures—pictures she had seen in the movies or in magazines—white-flanneled young men making love to daintily gowned ladies, herself, wistful and withholding, leaning over a flowered parapet the while into her ears a slender youth poured fluent solicitations. . . .

According to the signs adorning the telephone posts about Knightsville the excursion train which Emma was taking was due to arrive in Michigan City at noon. The excursionists would have to leave for the return trip at 11 P. M. This would bring Emma back to Knightsville at 6:05 A. M., just in time to get breakfast for the Washburns on Monday morning. A trip of over three hundred miles for the privilege of spending eleven hours on the shores of Lake Michigan!

But to Emma, lying sleepless under the roof of the Washburns' much-gabled villa, the next day stretched forth an illimitable, ecstatic vista! If only she could fall asleep and wake up to find it morning! What delights might not the next day hold for her! Lucky, too, that she was going with so witty and resourceful a companion as Clara Brockman. Clara worked as a typist in the office of Leland Ross, a leading lawyer of Knightsville. Emma met her at a dance and Clara, who was as sophisticated as Emma was naïve, recognized in the rather gawky but fresh-complexioned, pretty, country girl a partner who would serve as an excellent foil for her own audacity and daring. She knew that any man who would be decoyed by Emma's looks would succumb, if she wanted him to, to her, Clara's, superior technique. Privately Clara considered Emma a "clodhopper."

But Emma, who was quite unaware

of her friend's real opinion of her, was whole-heartedly grateful that Clara, who was so clever and educated—a stenographer—should embark on this excursion with herself, a mere hired girl. It would be wonderful to go with Clara. . . . And for her, Emma, who had never been fifty miles from Knightsville, to make a trip to the Lake—to Michigan City!

Ever since she was a little girl she had heard of this Magical City and had yearned to go there. To her it had been, always, as remote as Mars. And now, in a few hours, she was going there. After all, the night couldn't last forever. . . ! She would see the Lake that was as big as an ocean and had surf like the ocean. She would ride on miraculous vehicles, high in the air or through tunnels horrific and thrilling. She would have her picture taken, grasping the wheel of an automobile or sitting in an aeroplane. She would take a trip on one of the lake steamers. . . . All this Clara, who had been four times to Michigan City, had told her.

But Clara had told her more. Young men swarmed to Michigan City and it was not at all unlikely that she would meet some. All sorts of sporty fellows spent their Sundays there—fellows from as far off as Chicago and Grand Rapids, sometimes. Under the influence of the holiday spirit, these young men often became quite bold. . . .

Through the tangled web of Emma's thoughts there wove the recurrent idea that perhaps next day she would meet her Destiny—her Lover, the incarnation in flesh of the vague imaginings of years. . . . Surely, if she could meet him anywhere she would meet him in Michigan City, which drew to its seething breast the noblest youths of the country. Was it too much to hope that one of these would look upon her and find her desirable? Perhaps when the train left tomorrow night,

she would already know her Fate. She might meet him anywhere—on the beach, in a restaurant, near the band-stand. . . . What would he be like? What would he. . . .

The clangor of the alarm clock borked through and shattered her dreams. She opened her eyes and in a moment her consciousness was flooded with the thankful realization that *The Morning* was here. She jumped out of bed, turned off the alarm clock and started to dress, pulling on a pair of new tan silk stockings she had bought the day before at the Golden Rule store to wear especially for her outing.

Outside the sparrows were making a cheerful chatter. . . . Emma was suddenly assailed by the fear that it might rain. She hopped to the window on one foot to look out at the sky. It was a perfect blue.

While she dressed she hummed a sentimental song of the hour: the words were tawdry and the tune as obvious as a tom-tom, but for her this aubade said what Chopin and Heine say for the more cultivated. She put on a blue linen suit that matched her eyes, and a white, satin-covered hat on her straw-colored hair. When she had given herself a final, appraising look in the tiny mirror she started downstairs—very carefully so as not to disturb the sleeping Washburns.

In the kitchen she gulped a glass of milk and ate a jelly sandwich to fortify herself against the long train ride. Then she hastily packed the lunch for herself and Clara, prepared the night before, and put it into a shoebox: deviled eggs, jelly sandwiches, bananas, pickles and cake. With the shoebox under her arm she finally hurried out of the quiet house, suddenly fearful of being late for the train.

She arrived at the Monon station—whence the excursion left Knights-ville—and found that she still had forty minutes to wait. Quite out of breath with her fast walking, Emma sat on a bench outside the dingy wait-

ing room. She was content to sit there in the fresh morning air and wait for Clara. She was actually embarked on her great journey at last. Michigan City! It all seemed unreal, somehow. . . . What a day it would be! The lake, the crowds, the sense of freedom—the glorious adventure and romance of it!

Other excursionists began drifting out on to the platform—a quite jolly crowd, all dressed in their Sunday best. Among them Emma recognized the genial clerk of the Cash Grocery, and a group of noisy young men who worked at the wire-bound box factory, the chief industry of the town. As the minutes dragged by she began to worry about Clara; supposing she had failed her! Maybe Clara was sick and couldn't come!

Fortunately the excursion train was late—it always is—and when Clara breezed up at last, at 6:50, it had not yet arrived. Emma greeted her with dumb gratitude.

"What's the matter, Emma?" asked Clara. "You look all nervous!"

Emma falteringly replied that, had the train been on time, they would both have missed it, for she would not have dared go on the excursion without Clara.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Clara airily. "I knew the old train wouldn't be on time. It's not my first trip up there." This last she added with the complacent nonchalance of the experienced patronizing the unfledged.

Clara swept the now crowded platform with an appraising glance.

"Quite a bunch going up today," she remarked, "but I can't hand 'em much. Lookit, there's Frank Finch going up without Essie—the darn cheap skate!"

Emma looked. Just then the train whistled and the crowd pressed close to the edge of the platform.

## II

THE train was already full of passengers—excursionists from the

towns below Knightsville—from Ladoga, from Romney, from Mace. At Knightsville two more coaches were added, but Clara steered Emma into one of the other cars. "The idea," as Clara put it, "is to get away from these small-town boobs. We can meet them any old day. Besides, these Knightsville fellas are after girls they don't know."

Because it was Emma's first trip to Michigan City, Clara generously allowed her the seat near the window. When the train pulled out of the depot, Emma kept her eyes glued to the grimy window; the familiar landscape took on a sudden newness from the fact that she was riding past it in a train.

For the excursionists the railroad company provides ancient wooden coaches that shake and rattle like frame houses in a storm. Already the air in the car in which Clara and Emma sat was close and fetid with mingled odors of bananas, peanuts, oranges, and stale food. There were young men, sitting in hot discomfort with handkerchiefs stuck in their collars, old men without collars reading the Sunday papers, dirty-faced children crying for a drink which they did not want after they got it, men playing cards on the backs of suitcases stuffed with food and bathing-suits, girls with babies and without babies, loud-mouthed farmers laughing and exchanging doubtful anecdotes back and forth across the aisles. . . .

With panoramic glance Clara was languidly estimating the potentialities of her fellow-passengers. The faces she scanned were not different from those she had seen on the station platform at Knightsville, but to Clara they were interesting by virtue of their unfamiliarity. To the native of Knightsville a barber from Ladoga is somehow more glamorous than the practitioner from the native heath . . . this is the true pathos of distance!

When she had finished her prelim-

inary survey of the men in the car, Clara turned to Emma:

"Wish we could get to talking to a couple of live fellas to help pass the time away."

But Emma, her face pressed against the car window, absorbed in the slow-flying landscape, made no response. Clara, looking at her, resented her contentment. To think of anyone going on a tiresome excursion like this merely to look at the scenery!

As the morning wore on it became stiflingly hot in the car. The windows were half opened and a cinder got into Emma's eye. At first she did not mind, but gradually her eye began to swell and hurt. At last she turned to Clara, who had been flirting for some time with a flashily dressed young man across the aisle.

"Let's see if I can get it out for you," said Clara, not without impatience. She pulled at Emma's reddened lid. . . . The young man with whom she had been flirting saw his opportunity. He rose, went to the water-cooler at the end of the car and wet his handkerchief.

"Here, hold this against your eye," he said, offering Emma the handkerchief. Emma, confused at being spoken to by so elegant a stranger, did not know what to say.

"Oh, thanks so much," breathed Clara, "she'll be all right in a minute."

The young man hovered over the two girls and held forth at some length on various remedies for removing cinders from eyes.

"A good idea is to pull down your lid and blow your nose hard," he advised.

Without further ado the young man settled himself comfortably on the edge of the car seat and proceeded to talk about himself. He told them he was Russell Dwiggins from Romney, fifteen miles below Knightsville on the Monon. Clara warmed to him immediately. Did he know Lois Servies? Mr. Dwiggins not only knew Lois but he was proud to say he had gone with her.

"Then, that makes it all right for you to speak to us without a formal introduction, because Lois is my cousin."

There followed a lively conversation between Clara and Mr. Dwiggins about Lois Servies. It was nothing short of a miracle that they had not met before, for Clara had visited Lois several times in Romney. . . . Almost at once the two established an entente from which Emma was excluded. Already there had formed in the minds of both of them the thought that Emma was there, sitting where he, Russell Dwiggins, should have been sitting. And Emma, unable to find words to frame her thoughts, began to be conscious that she was, in some indefinable way, an intruder.

They were about thirty miles from their destination when Clara thought of the luncheon which Emma had brought. At Clara's behest Mr. Dwiggins reached up in the rack for the shoebox, and the three of them devoured the luncheon which had been prepared for two. Emma had decided earlier that they would save the food for a picnic on the beach, but somehow she was not consulted.

"It's better to eat it now," counseled Mr. Dwiggins easily, "than when you get there. You look like all the rest of the country jakes carryin' a box o' lunch around."

Emma was so excited she could hardly eat. She divided her attention between looking out of the window and munching a deviled egg.

"When do we see the lake?" asked Emma.

"You can't see it from the train," answered Clara. She and Russell seasoned travelers, exchanged significant glances. How green this girl was! Incredible to think anyone could possibly be so inexperienced!

"Nothing new in the lake to me," said Russell, deftly stripping a banana of its skin.

"Me either," echoed Clara.

"I been to Michigan City three

times already this summer!" he boasted.

This was a record to dazzle even Clara.

"Three times!" she exclaimed.

"Yep," replied Russell nonchalantly.

Emma, feeling a sense of rebuke, lapsed into a pained silence. She was out of place, after all, with high-toned, sophisticated people like Clara and Mr. Dwiggins. Always she had been timid, conscious of her own awkwardness, her unreadiness of speech, her ignorance. She listened wonderingly to Clara's fluent talk, her laughter, her repartee. It must be wonderful to be like that . . . !

The iron-voiced brakeman stuck his head in at the front end of the car and bawled:

"Next stop—Mich'gan City! Mich'gan City!"

Emma felt her heart give a little jump. She looked out of the window and saw a few straggling, wooden houses. Already she was past the frontier of the Promised Land.

### III

WHAT would be the impressions of a cultivated Mohammedan coming to Michigan City on a Sunday in August? . . . Thousands of sweltering people, their faces locked in a fixed expression, bent desperately on finding pleasure, stuffing jerry-built temples of amusement, pot-bellied towers, flamboyantly painted pagodas, riding interminably on Ferris-wheels, racing through papier-mâché Hells, having their pictures taken, their palms read, their weights appraised. . . . Satiated with the mechanical devices for projection and gyration, they loll on the hot rubbish-strewn beach. The intuitive youth, working for the resort, who conceived the phrase, "The Coney Island of the West," thereby immortalized Michigan City overnight. To the inhabitants of the corn-belt Michigan City is a voluptuary Mecca, a Hoosier

Riviera. It is Ostend and Deauville, Vauxhall and the Lido—it is, in very truth, Coney Island!

With clearly felt mastery, Mr. Dwiggins piloted his two ladies into the maelstrom of people in front of the Monon depot. His first official act was to buy the girls a brace of ice-cream cones. These they nibbled as they walked along toward the beach, jostled by the thick procession of sightseers. Emma had never seen so many people in her life. As she stared about her, bewildered, Russell nudged Clara.

"Can't we get your girl friend to find herself a fella?" he whispered.

"She don't want anybody. She came along for the sights."

"What'd you bring her for?"

"She made me," said Clara. "I couldn't get out of it."

Emma did not hear what they said, but she felt that they were whispering about her. Somehow, the ecstasy which she had known in the morning began to ebb; she became increasingly conscious of her inferiority, her clumsiness in conversation. Several times she wanted to burst into the talk between Mr. Dwiggins and Clara, to say something gay and clever which would make them both laugh, but she could think of nothing to say. . . . She was not like all these other people—like Clara and Mr. Dwiggins and the thousands about her. They belonged here, in Michigan City. They belonged to the great world of pleasure. As for her, she was an outsider—nothing more.

They went bathing. Russell and Clara could both swim out, Emma couldn't. She clung to the edge of the water, in her ill-fitting, rented bathing-suit, while Mr. Dwiggins, bold fellow, led Clara out a bit beyond the tiny breakers. It was there that he fully voiced his protest against Emma.

"Say, do we have to stick around with that dumb jane all day?"

"I wish she could get somebody for herself," said Clara wistfully.

"All she could get is a cold!"

"I suppose it's too late to do anything now. . . ."

"What do you say we ditch her?"

"But how?" asked Clara.

"Easy as falling off a log! Lose her in the crowd. Get separated. Then when you meet her again at home you can tell her you looked all over for her. Nothing to it!"

"But suppose we meet up with her again here?"

"Never mind, we won't. Not with my eyesight!"

Clara hesitated.

"Emma'll never get over the fright of being here alone."

"What's the odds—it'll do her good. Besides, you can't help it if you get lost from each other in all this jam, can you?"

Before they had returned to Emma, Clara had consented to Russell's scheme.

"Just leave it all to me!" he said, as they approached Emma, who was building a castle in the wet sand.

For a few minutes they lazed on the beach: Russell's head pillowed on Clara's lap. Emma, her sand castle destroyed by a group of rowdy bathers, stretched out, gazing out across the Lake.

At last Russell rose, stretched elaborately and said:

"I need something to wet my whistle. What do you say we get a drink of orangeade from that stand over the other side of the bath-house. Want to come with me, Clara?"

"Sure, I'm thirsty as the dickens, Russell."

"What you want us to bring you to drink?" Mr. Dwiggins asked Emma, solicitously.

"I don't care," replied Emma, timidly.

"We'll get you a nice cold bottle of lemon pop—how's that?"

And the two strode away in the direction of the bath-house. Then, as if an after-thought, Mr. Dwiggins turned and yelled to her:

"Don't you go straying away with



any of these fellas so's we can't find you when we come back."

A few minutes later Russell and Clara emerged from the bath-house, fully dressed, and stood in the midst of a protecting crowd, looking at Emma.

"We've done it," exulted Russell, "we've shook her!"

#### IV

THE sun beat down on Emma. After a time she relapsed into that state of semi-consciousness where to lie still is torture but volition somehow numbed, making it impossible to stir. The effect of the water had worn off completely, she felt herself clutched in a hot, iron vise. A terrible thirst eroded her throat. When would Mr. Dwiggins return with that drink of lemon pop he promised her?

She relapsed into a torpor. Sun-spots danced before her eyes, a mad witches' dance. It was as if she were lying in a tiny cell no bigger than her body, encuffed . . . stifling . . . when would Mr. Dwiggins come with that drink?

She wrenched herself awake. Mr. Dwiggins and Clara were a long time away, she thought. She rose to her feet and looked toward the soft-drink stand. They were there, of course. She wanted to go over and see if she could find them, but was afraid that she might miss them. Again she sat down. She waited a half hour. Finally she got up again and started toward the bath-house.

She reached the stand and joined the thick fringe of people fighting to buy drinks. Anxiously she searched in the crowd for the faces of Clara and Mr. Dwiggins . . . but they were not there. Well, perhaps they had strolled on down the beach in their bathing-suits. She looked in the direction of the water. She ought, she felt, to go back and wait for them and yet she wanted to get somewhere out of the sun. Her head ached: she couldn't stand this glare. . . .

And yet, if she moved, she might miss Clara and Mr. Dwiggins altogether. They would come back and not finding her there, be angry. She must not make them angry. Clara had been very good to come with her. And Mr. Dwiggins, too, had been kind, lavish with ice-cream cones. Perhaps, at this very minute, he was bringing her a bottle of lemon pop. She must go back and wait for them.

She returned to where she had been sitting and began again to build a sand castle. . . . Fifteen minutes passed . . . thirty . . . an hour. She had no watch so she could not tell the time. She gave up finally working at the sand castle. Loneliness was enveloping her. . . .

Several times she got up, shaded her eyes with her hands, and looked about her. She saw no sign of either Clara or Mr. Dwiggins. Should she go into the bath-house and put on her clothes? It was a bit thoughtless of Clara to be gone so long. Apprehensions floated through her mind: perhaps they had come back while she was at the soft-drink stand and, finding her gone, had started out in search of her. Perhaps—horrible thought—they had been killed on the roller-coaster. Should she go over to the park and look for them? It would be a relief to get away from this burning sand, to move about, to do something! And yet she found herself unable to stir. She must stay there, or, returning, they would miss her. And Clara would be angry with her. She must not give Clara cause to be angry with her. . . .

Throughout the long afternoon she kept her vigil, hoping that each minute would bring Clara and Mr. Dwiggins back to her. She sat on the beach, motionless, tears welling to her eyes.

It was six o'clock. The sun, a crimson ball, swathed in fiery clouds, was hanging just over the top of the Lake. Dazed, racked with headache, she stumbled to her feet at last, and started for the bath-house. How

would she ever find them in this crowd? Perhaps, even now, they were on the beach, searching for her. She started back again . . . they were not there. What should she do?

After she had put on her street clothes again she began to tramp the beach ceaselessly. Once she thought she saw them. Her heart leaped wildly and she rushed forward; but the figures she thought were Mr. Dwiggins and Clara disappeared suddenly.

It was then that, for the first time, a suspicion of the truth dawned upon her. Could it be that they had left her, deliberately; that they were not at this moment looking for her, but exulting in the fact that they had lost her! The thought stunned her. She stood quite still before the garish exterior of a shooting gallery. It couldn't be that Clara and Mr. Dwiggins would do that! She was doing Clara an injustice . . . and yet they had not returned. She had waited.

It was dark. The lights along the beach made a puny assault against the calm stars. With the setting sun the lake had deepened from a rich greenish blue to turquoise. Now, it was a smooth, splendid mantle of black velvet. Emma walked out on the pier and found a vacant bench. She peered into the faces of the lovers that strolled by. She asked herself why she should watch. They had left her. If she saw them she would not speak to them. But she sat on. She had a

fear that if she stood up, she would faint. . . .

Hunger at last drove her to a place for something to eat. She drank some strong coffee and ate an egg sandwich. Then she returned to the pier and resumed her watch.

She asked a stranger the time. Ten o'clock. . . . She must be getting to the station.

She walked painfully, like an old woman, to the Monon depot, reaching there fifty minutes before train time. She sat on a bench on the platform waiting for the train to be announced.

In the mad rush of the returning excursionists she caught a glimpse of Clara and Mr. Dwiggins. Instinctively she hung back and went into another car. . . . The coach was full when she entered it. She looked about for a seat. The only one empty was beside a huge Italian, sitting in shirt-sleeves, fanning his perspiring face with a straw fan. . . .

He saw Emma looking for a seat and he constricted his ungainly bulk, leaving a narrow space for her.

She sat down. The train started. She looked down and saw the Italian's hand on her knee. On one finger was a zinc ring, believed by some to ward off rheumatism. . . .

An ironic thought twisted through her mind. This man, who was leering at her, was the Hero she had dreamt she would meet in Michigan City . . . ! She began to cry. The Italian, abashed, drew away his hand. . . .



NICHE—the vacant space in which a saint once stood.



# The Nietzschean Follies

## VI

### Meditations Au Hazard

By Walter E. Sagmaster

#### I

##### *On Feminine Gravity*

IT is interesting to speculate on why woman has no sense of humor—the fact, of course, being one of the favorite platitudes of the Neanderthal Man. Is it because of an inherent defect in her composition which prevents her from seeing a joke? Is it because she is by nature of a more serious and earnest disposition than man? Is it because she is above such nonsense?

No; I believe it is rather simply that it is not *necessary* for her to have a sense of humor. Corollary: A sense of humor, like eyeglasses and draught horses, came into the world through necessity, and, in this instance, the necessity was wholly and entirely on the part of man. So long as life was nothing more than a subconscious process, man had no need of a palliative, but when it became guided by and subordinate to a consciousness—trouble arose, and has been arising ever since.

With women, life is even at this late day, and, in all probability, will be forever, little more than a subconscious process. This is not intended to be disparaging; indeed, it may well be that woman, relying so utterly and implicitly upon her subconsciousness as she does, is on the whole better off than man, who is essentially a conscious, deliberating, reasoning and cautious creature. Certainly no one will deny the enormous extent to which woman depends, in her daily life, upon her intuition—which is

another name for her subconsciousness; how it secures precedence in every instance over so mean and insignificant a thing as a mere brain; how reasoning, which is a prime quality of the developed mentality, is an impossible accomplishment for 999 out of every 1000 women, and how even the thousandth masters it in only a weak, flabby and inconsequential fashion—the fashion, say, of an advanced kindergarten pupil. It is not their province; for their province is the intuition, which has no more to do with that power of deliberative estimation we call reason than a poem by Edgar A. Guest has to do with art.

Now, life being for women little more than a subconscious process, things go on relatively smoothly for her, because, to quote another of the Neanderthal Man's most beloved saws, recently referred to by Bernard Shaw: except during the nine months before he takes his first breath, no man conducts his life half so well as a tree does. And, during those nine months, of course, the subconscious has full sway. Woman, it is true, has taken her first breath, but she has not sought to direct her life, or to investigate her life, in anything like the degree that man has. Here lieth the secret. Man—even the meanest man, to a degree—has contracted a habit, during the past several thousand years, of examining, weighing, meditating upon, inquiring into, taking to pieces, theorizing about, and in divers other ways seeking to direct and mould life

according to his own ideas and predilections—a habit, that is, of philosophizing. Every man—again, even the meanest man—is in some degree a congenital philosopher. Even the lowest bricklayer stops once in a while and, with trowel suspended in midair, gazes absently and abstractly at a passing cloud and vaguely wonders, in his rude, untutored way, what it is all about. You will never see a dressmaker do this, or a housemaid, or a lady stenographer,—no, nor any of the boiled-shirt mesdames who grace several of our State legislatures—all yokel opinion to the contrary. If there is anything further from any other thing than a woman is from philosophy, the difference must be expressed in light miles.

Man, then, is an animal much given to an attempt to interpret and direct life. This entails philosophy, and philosophy entails a great, inscrutable ponderosity, ever bearing down upon the life of man; an ever present shadow, as it were, lingering over his soul; an indefinable lugubriousness which grows with the mysterious and appalling secrets which man discovers as he turns over each successive layer of life. This is the penalty for the interference with the subconscious processes of Nature by the conscious mind. Woman never dreams of doing any such thing; for her it is congenitally impossible. Man does it continually, in varying degree and intensity, conforming to different individualities,—for him it is congenitally incumbent—irresistible. Man, therefore, must suffer: his mind knows not the care-free, blithe, irresponsible, untroubled blessedness of the mind which does not consciously busy itself with the operation of the Universe. It becomes gradually oppressed; it is immersed, with the ever increasing consciousness that this "life" thing is an awful business indeed, in a sea of melancholy, fear and despair—deeper and deeper it sinks until finally, a poor, bewildered, frightened thing, it screams into the heavens: "I can't stand it! Give me something—anything—to ease the pain!" . . . And then, when no

answer comes from without, man suddenly discovers that the anæsthetic, or rather the power of concocting it, is lurking in his own being, waiting only to be recognized, appropriated and put to work.

And, with a zest which may be profitably likened to a starving negro pouncing upon an itinerant hen, man has been putting this power to work quite sedulously ever since he first became aware of its existence, the power, that is, of creating and relishing the great ha-ha; the power of flinging back into the face of Life the very terrors it has set up to scare us; the power, in brief, of humor. It is by virtue of this anæsthetic that man is enabled to bear the strain of constant prying into the fundamentals of life. And it is because woman is neither fitted nor inclined to engage in any inquiry into the fundamentals of life, and consequently has no need for a sense of humor, (without which a sense of humor, like everything else under the sun, is impossible) that she can see nothing but tedious boredom in "The Innocents Abroad," and nothing but an acute lack of good taste in the size of Charlie Chaplin's pants.

## II

### *An Infalible Yardstick*

WOULD you secure the true measure of a man? Then by all means watch him at his newspaper. It is one of the most reliable of all tests—rarely, if ever, does it fail.

We will divide all men, say, into three classes: 1, civilized men; 2, indifferent men; 3, insignificant men.

Class 3 will read, very seriously and deliberately, the front page, then the editorials, and finally the death notices.

Class 2 will read, with unflagging interest and intense pleasure, the daily installment of a novel by some unknown hack, then turn to the dramatic criticism, and finish up with the sport page.

Class 1 will go straight to the comic sheet, thence to the patent medicine

"testimonial" ads., and conclude with the "Advice to Girls." . . .

### III

#### *Exhibit 13,938-C*

THE theory that woman is the aggressor in love bouts is as stale and covered with verdigris as the theory that if one eats too many green apples one will achieve a belly-ache; still, every once in a while a particularly apt proof of the contention bobs up and deserves note, if only for the purpose of assisting to complete the voluminous mass of information on the subject already piled up.

When a woman in love learns that some other gal has appeared on the horizon and is giving her affinity the high sign, she immediately evinces, and usually expresses, an intense desire to handle the intruding lady's hair in a rough and barbarous fashion. Never for a moment does she blame the man: on the contrary, she regards him as quite as much a helpless victim of the vamp, directly, as she is herself, indirectly. If she expresses any emotion whatsoever concerning him, it is sympathy. And why? Simply because *she knows*;—the "movies" may flourish, publishers may wax rich on the sales of best-sellers, theories of the potent and influential existence of romance may run riot in the land, but—*she knows*; and in such a contingency gives ample evidence of her knowledge. It is not the man, she will tell you, but the new lady, who has done the dirty work—who has grabbed from her her cutie—by the identical method which she herself used to grab him from someone else, or, if he were at the time unattached, to grab him from himself.

You ask for the method? Nothing more or less than to induce the young man to want her excessively and exclusively, by the simple but infallible expedient of persuading him that he is the one who is doing the inducing. This method is not always a conscious process—probably it is but rarely so, which fact, far from being detrimental,

actually enhances the results immensely. And the method is always the same, whether consciously applied or not.

Now, what occurs when a man is placed in a similar position; when he discovers, that is, that some enterprising male has come between him and his sweetie? Does he rant and rave against the newcomer, and threaten to knock his block off? If he happens to be the "strong man" of a trading post in a Rex Beach novel—yes. Otherwise, he merely turns a sad, damp, woe-begone expression upon the maid of his heart and croons plaintively: "So, Cynthia, you do not love me any more. You care for another. Why did you do this? What had I done to you?"

You see? It is biologically impossible for him to conceive of the affair having been anything other than an out and out offensive on the part of his beloved. The other man is but a tool—he is putty in the hands of Cynthia: thus is the situation regarded by lover No. 1. He instinctively knows, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that it was something in the way Cynthia operated her eyelashes, or pursed her lips, or puffed on a cigarette, or walked across the room, or played with children, or received some banal pleasantry of lover No. 2's, or tapped her foot—or any other one or several of some million-and-a-half movements, gestures, sounds, etc., which turned the other man's heart into something very much resembling a Flying Dervish in the midst of a hot sandstorm.

And remember, not only is this being done thousands of times a day, but it rarely fails—and is still more rarely suspected by the sighing Romeos. On the surface, this may sound grossly egotistical. A little reflection, however, will dispel any such hasty conclusion. It is not a particular man that a woman wants and goes after—it is *a* man. The fact that she ultimately singles out a certain individual is not, at bottom, due to any special attributes which he may possess. These attributes do, of course, enter into the matter, and eventually play a large and important part, but



they are always secondary. The fact that he is a man is the essential thing—all else must and does give way to that. And, in the last analysis, probing still deeper, we may say that it is not primarily a man that a woman wants at all,—but children. Woman does not consciously realize this: if ever she does so, romance will be killed deader than a Seventh-Day Adventist prayer-meeting—or, it will become more vividly and scintillatingly alive than Pavlova in the "Festival at Bagdad,"—according to what definition one attaches to the word.

## IV

*On Education*

THE true education of a civilized man consists not so much in learning new things as in unlearning old ones—in disposing, as it were, of the bogus knowledge which he contracted during adolescence, and, perhaps, youth—if he be one of those unfortunate individuals whose civilization has been postponed until the latter part of his life.

He must unlearn, for instance, among other things, that Jesus Christ founded the Roman Church, or any of its innumerable sects; that England surrendered to the Colonies in 1781 because her entire available fighting force had been utterly defeated; that by imbibing a concoction composed of a beaten egg and a tumbler of milk once a day, anyone, no matter how skinny, will, within approximately six weeks' time, require a suit of clothes at least three sizes larger; that a symphony concert is a musical performance in which the musicians play such unrelated and meaningless sounds as are most calculated to mystify and bore the auditor to extinction, and that the auditor is perfectly willing to be mystified and bored to extinction so long as, upon leaving the auditorium rather late, some passing cigar salesman may perceive him and remark, in awed, subdued tones: "There's one of them music lovers"; that Longfellow was a great poet; that the Venus de Milo is admired by art

critics not so much on account of its exquisite symmetry and the evident mastery of its creator, as on account of the fact that it is so scantily draped; that honesty is the best policy; that DeMaupassant was crazy; that it is possible for a committee made up of be-wrinkled, shriveled schoolmarms, professional reformers, Methodist preachers, lady politicians and owners of soft-drink factories to prevent a whiskey and beer drinking populace from drinking whiskey and beer; that Walt Whitman had as many gals as he claimed to have had; that the greatest city in the world is necessarily the city with the tallest buildings, the most electric lights, and the greatest number of automobile accidents; that the fact that a man marries a woman is proof conclusive of the fact that he regards marriage as a laudable, satisfactory, workable and efficient system; that if one drink too many Coca-Colas one will become a drug fiend; that all Irish girls are pure, all French girls wicked, and all Italian girls possessed of beautiful voices; that Sappho was a Greek slave who was carried, sans vestments, up the steps of the Coliseum, in the arms of Alphonse Daudet, a Roman general under Nero; that one may be relieved of a toothache by the simple means of refusing to believe there is such a thing as a tooth, or an ache, or a simple means; that it is possible to learn anything except by teaching oneself; and that virtue is its own reward.

## V

*On Happiness*

HAPPINESS does not depend, primarily, upon external forces or conditions, as is generally supposed, but rather upon internal attitudes. The thing itself which we say makes us happy is not nearly so important as the way in which we regard it,—as our attitude toward it. Man's life is but a series of these attitudes, and inasmuch as they are, without exception, emanations from the subconsciousness, he has little or no control over them. In the creature of

moods, who is invariably of a more cultivated, refined and civilized type than the individual to whom moods is but another name for mania, these attitudes are not only of a highly ephemeral and vacillatory character, but they are, for the greater part, of a more or less cynical, skeptical, pessimistic, melancholic and morbid nature, and thus any appreciable degree of happiness, in the general sense of the term, is impossible for them. In the balance of humanity,—that is to say, in the congenital-ignoramus class,—we find just the opposite condition: the attitudes are both fewer in number, and consequently of longer duration, and, for the most part, of a credulous, optimistic, sentimental and puerile nature, and as a consequence bring in their wake a greater proportion of happiness.

At first glance, it would seem from the above that the educated man (I use the adjective in its broadest sense) is hopelessly outstripped by the oaf in the race for happiness. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that in every case the attitudes of the educated man are of a greater intensity and of an infinitely more refined quality than those of the oaf, which accounts for the phenomenon of his realizing a far more sublime and ineffable happiness, when he does so at all, than the former. On the other hand, it is of course true that when the educated man is unhappy he is, owing to the very intensity and quality of his attitudes mentioned, more profoundly unhappy than his ignorant brother,—and this latter condition, as I have already pointed out, is his usual state.

There are people who become unutterably happy in listening to the allegretto of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, and people who remain adamantly impervious to it. There are

people who suffer untold tortures in the company of messy, squawky children, and people who become divinely happy in running free day nurseries. Here, neither the allegretto of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony nor messy, squawky children are the deciding factors, but rather the attitudes of their respective auditors.

Man, in progressing, has made a great sacrifice, but he has gained thereby a great boon. He has relinquished the opportunity of a steady, seldom interrupted, reasonably happy existence, that is, the existence of the yokel, for a life generally dull, depressing and colorless, but dotted by occasional, short-lived, sporadic intervals of æsthetic rapture, that is, the existence of the higher man. The price is great,—has the purchase been worth it? In moments of extreme pessimism we are apt to impulsively and unthinkingly exclaim a bitter "No!" But even as we do so we realize deep within us that it has: that one touch of the beauty of Shelley, or the glory of Raphael, or the intermingled sublimity, power and sweetness of Beethoven, is worth infinitely more than all the happy firesides, smiling children and comfortable bank accounts that have ever existed since the world began,—and that fifty years of Europe is worth an eternity of Cathay.

To feel thus,—not to profess it merely, as is so much done by impertinent, half-educated impostors in this our fair Republic,—but to feel it, conscientiously, inherently, completely, is to have the soul of an artist. And to have the soul of an artist is to suffer much that what joy there is may be elevated, refined, exalted, sublimated,—lifted by the majesty of a great spirit to the heights,—raised by the alchemy of an exquisite soul from the glaring tawdriness of gilt to the soft purity of gold.



# Sub Specie Eternitatus

By Benjamin De Casseres

## I

MY errand took me toward the river, so I turned into Wall Street. It was just midnight on Trinity's clock. It was a pale, wan night with a half-moon overhead. The buildings about Broadway and Wall Street, so matter of fact and substantial in the daylight, seemed to me just now, in that wan glimmer that came from the stars and the moon and the subtle phosphor from the bodies of the hundred-year-old dead who lay in Trinity churchyard, things unimaginably remote, things that were on the point of leaving for some mystic Elsewhere. If landscapes are a state of mind, as Amiel has said, so are buildings and churchyards and asphalted streets.

And just now, by a peculiar concurrence of psychic and physical factors, everything in the universe was a state of my mind. All matter and space seemed to lapse into its primordial condition of Idea-Ghost. And as I, like every pulsating thing in the universe, stood in the very centre of a periphery without circumference, why had not I for a few minutes become that primordial Idea-Ghost?

At least in that minute that I turned into Wall Street at Trinity Church—and my errand took me toward the river—I had that feeling of *certainly* that comes only once or twice in a lifetime of the utter insubstantiality and phantasmagoric nature of all that we call tangible.

And yet, falling as I did into this Lethe of the concrete and the sensuously apprehensible, I did not quite lose my bearings of mundane things. I passed

the little door of the Stock Exchange and noticed that it was wide open. Strange thing at this time of night, I thought. This certainly is no flantasy. Before I knew it, Curiosity directing my feet more than my head, I was in the building and on the floor of the place where they traffick in Things-as-they-are.

A strange light beat about the walls—the same quality of light I had observed at the head of the street, or rather, maybe, the same strange glamor which I had projected by some sudden psychochemical change in my brain or soul. The commonplace enough interior of the exchange seemed fantasmoramic and diaphanous—as if someone had pulled the shroud of spirit over the still warm corpse of matter. Where now, I thought with a brain-smile, are the snouted minds who will be here at ten o'clock? Their sty is quite another place just now, and the yammer of their souls, can it ever again disturb the faultless magic of this silence?—my special silence, perhaps, made up of prenatal souvenirs rather than of the mere negation of sound.

And as I stood there in the middle of the room cast into a dream, feeling that I must, in spite of this wayward experience, continue my errand which took me to the river, I became aware—as one often becomes *aware* of things before the proof of the senses reduces them merely to knowledge—that there was someone else in this room besides myself.

I looked toward the row of benches against the wall and I saw one of my closest friends seated there. Everything had been so unreal to me since turning the corner of Broadway and

Wall Street that this last Appearance gave me no surprise. I walked over and sat beside him.

As I sat down he pressed my hand, and the roof and columns and walls of that too, too solid Stock Exchange faded and resolved themselves into strange and antique forms.

All the edifices wherein man has worshiped in some form seemed to rise and fall before my eye in a linked procession. I thought I saw the Temple of Karnak, to the columns of which clung giant basilisks whose eyes were shining brains of infoliate dreams; then the Temple of Jerusalem builded by Solomon to the glory of Elohim, and on its latter step stood the High Priest blowing his shofar into the great echo of Time which is called Eternity; then I beheld and knew—how to know or not know in that charivari of my discarnate memorabilia?—that I was in the Temple of Paphos, where Aphrodite, born of the sea and who will survive all seas, stood on a quivering dais built of the blood-sap of her hallucinated adorers. Her breasts were like inverted porphyry basins of static seas; her eyes like two golden stars frozen in their sockets in space; her lips were like a slit strawberry, and her navel seemed like a great blind eye, symbol of her eternal hegemony.

Then for a moment in my then spumescent consciousness there lingered a pause, wherein, it seemed, Nothing—the metaphysical protoplasm of our seemings—supervened; then there suddenly was projected across my vision a monstrous picture wherein the High Priest of Israel lay in the rapturous embrace of Aphrodite, in whose long silken-golden tresses lay tangled the basilisks that I had seen on the columns of the Temple of Karnak.

Gradually the picture faded and I was back in the Stock Exchange again, diaphanous, imponderable, strangely lighted, and by my side sat my friend, smiling.

## II

"ALL temples are alike," he said to

me. "What you have just seen is a symbol of all worship. The High Priest and Aphrodite are one, and the Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Paphos—one is merely the penetralia of the other. And the Basilisk is the fine ironic eye of the emancipated soul whose look gives death to both gods and flesh.

"I was, as you know, High Priest in the Temple at Jerusalem, and I saw Aphrodite rise from the sea and found her dreams in stone on Paphian soil. And the Basilisk—I think I was that first of all, a combination of Pierrot and Jeremiah that walked the mists of Chaos, a spy-eye and laughing retina that saw from the ancient murk the foolish reiterations of man and all the crucifixions that should be. In Eternity life is intermittent, but in life Eternity is intermittent, and you have had a peep into Eternity, into the routine of God, into that single vibration which is called Time and that oscillant illusion which you call life."

"But why are you here in the Stock Exchange?" I asked, half forgetting my errand which took me toward the river. That errand, I felt now, would never see its issue—at least not for some years. The marvel of this midnight in the very stomach of New York set my mind on the high fantastic marvels of life. It was true, true then, that one *could* disinter the corpse of Beauty in the very high noon of materialism, that one *could* still spin fables with the real and in the retorts of the imagination deform, mutilate and volatilize facts—facts, the least necessary of all things in the world.

"I am here," replied my friend who had listened to me meditate, "because this, too, is a temple as marvelous as any. Men come here for the same reason that they go to church or synagogue—to worship. The World-Spirit takes many shapes, and Mammon is as beautiful as Aphrodite or Madonna or Amon-Râ. I am quite modern, like everyone, and modernity has taught me so much. Besides—" and here he smiled at me, his wistful, half-articulate smile

—"if you wish to survive you must wear the mask of the age.

"You see I was a little bit mad when I crossed the gods in that long ago and they skewered me to the Caucasus; and madder, madder still when I affronted Caiaphas. They were merry, murderous pranks and I underestimated the sense of humor of my contemporaries. But one must pay mightily for one's sense of humor—especially when one's laugh o'ertops the laugh of the gods and outsounds the threats of the Furies.

"These poor Knights of the Absolute—who will ever understand their incorrigible laugh! They hang them, crucify them, martyrize them—and then found vast religious and æsthetic systems in their names. Those who believe of course do not know that it is all part of the jest—that our smile, nebulous and vague and sown with incomprehensible hints, plays over them from altar and sacristy and even from the treetops on the slopes of Parnassus.

"As Buddha, as Prometheus, as Mahomet, as the evasive prisoner that Pilate washed his hands of, I suffered the tortures of the damned, but that is the penalty that the Practical Joker must pay.

"But one day in Paris I met one Maître François Rabelais. He read his book to me and I discovered finer, better and more profitable things in life than bo-trees and Calvaries and prancing steeds that carry one to the Seventh Heaven. It was through him that I found the Earth. I substituted the guffaw for the smile that wreaths the face of tomb-breakers. There is no reality but matter, and the Kingdom of Heaven

is a farce; but I had joked about it so much in ancient times that I think I rather came to believe in it, with results that the world knows all about.

"Today, now, in this age, this is my temple. Where I shall set up my temple a thousand years from now I do not know; but, as I told you, I shall wear the mask of the age, except when an age grows religious and mystical. Then I shall appear as the anti-Christ—even if it costs me one of my lives.

"How weak, how silly is human nature," he went on musingly. "They pray to impossible gods when right among them walk the real gods. They took me seriously in India and invented the juggernaut. They took me seriously in Judea and invented a juggernaut called Church. But Epicurus and Rabelais and Goethe taught them all they need to know—and our modern Nietzsche, whose star is yet below the horizon."

"And tomorrow?" I asked as I saw my friend had concluded and the strange white light maculated with purple that filled the room was fading. "And tomorrow?"

"Why, tomorrow, I am bulling Union Pacific. I have three new mistresses and their superbness needs tender care. Wish me luck, and suspend your errand that takes you to the river. Today is as marvelous as any ancient day. Adieu."

\* \* \*

I was on Wall Street. The door of the Stock Exchange was closed. It was still twelve o'clock by Trinity's clock. My errand which will take me to the river is still—a thought.





# The Mother

By L. M. Hussey

## I

THE seed of her misfortunes was rooted in her own nature, for she was too mild, too gentle. In the beginning, newly married, her complaisant simplicity charmed her husband, and then, little by little, it annoyed him. These annoyances accumulated, one upon another, like a building that rises from the small, collected increments of separate blocks. Finally her meekness enraged him and he beat her.

Thus they entered upon the final phase of their life together. It came quickly, within a few years after their marriage, but it was not quickly ended. She lived with the General for many years after the first of his violences; they lived together until their last child was old enough to enter the Academy and their oldest boy had left the country and gone adventuring to the United States.

The General, her husband, had a turbulent character. He looked, physically, like a brigand. From late hours and indefatigable drinking, two dark pouches of flesh grew under his eyes and gave to his face a menacing appearance. This was accentuated by a large nose and a thick jaw that, however recently shaved, was always tinted a purple-blue from the exuberance of his beard. At one time he wore an immense black mustache, a fashionable adornment in the earlier days of political adventure. This was abbreviated after the birth of his fourth legitimate child and, while he was in love with the woman named

Belen, to a less ponderous ornament. Later he shaved his mustache completely, revealing the complete straight line of a singularly determined mouth.

His outbreaks against his wife usually took place late at night when he was partly or completely drunk. On entering his home he seemed to inspire an air that enraged him. His previous humor, it seemed, bore no relation to this reaction. He might have been laughing on the street a second before; perhaps he had sung an indecent song on the corner before reaching his home or waved goodbye to his friends with his two strong arms—but within the doors of his own house these agreeable moods evaporated like a curiously volatile fluid. His forehead would contract until it was divided almost mathematically by two frowning lines proceeding up from his nose. He would call his wife, and then, when she did not answer, he would search for her.

She soon learned to hide from him and sometimes, when he was fatigued, he would give up the search before her place of concealment was discovered. She hid herself away in any convenient place. He would come upon her under a bed and drag her out like a bundle of old clothes. He would find her in one of the big closets and then shut her up there, a prisoner until morning. Occasionally he contented himself with slapping her face, but again he might strike her severely and often, so that the next day she was bruised and ill.

He used to hold her blanched, ter-

rified face between his two hands and glower at her, making ferocious faces like a fabulous bogey-man. Then, finding her so spiritless and so weak, his anger would increase. He despised her for her docility; he despised her tears, her supplications, her weakness.

Yet in character she was not entirely weak. She had a peculiar steadfastness that made her enduring; she endured sacrificially, for the sake of her children. It is not, of course, easy in her country to leave a husband; divorce is very rare, and the place is a man's world. Yet she lived for so long in terror of the General that she must have found inevitably a means of separation if their marriage had been childless.

They had three children in the course of the first five years, and the fourth, another boy, after an interval of six years. Toward these the mother conceived a passionate and abiding sense of duty. She did not reason upon the bounds or possible limitations of her duty to them nor consider that she owed something to her own life. She had no life independent of her boys. Through them she developed her sole egotism, her only sense of definite personal importance. This egotism found expression in her conviction that she was wholly necessary to her children, that they would come to nothing without her, that they would even die without her ministering care. It never came to her mind that anyone else could take her place. They needed her only; she alone sufficed them.

She was a good mother in that she loved her boys completely, but not an ideal mother, because she was, through her misfortunes, unable to command their respect, or much of their obedience. They soon learned to disrespect her. They saw her too often in the indignity of flight from the General, or disheveled after encountering him, or pleading, or in tears. They admired their father. He was strong; he was a kind of ferocious god.

The spectacle of their mother's

degradation became, for the children, a sort of exciting spectacle, a kind of boisterous vaudeville. In the night, awaking, the oldest boy, Rodrigo, would feel the house vibrate with the stamping of his father's feet. Sitting up in bed, nudging his brother Hector, with whom he slept, he would wait to assure himself of the comedy. These two would sit in bed, very quiet, holding their breath like spectators at a melodrama, waiting and listening.

They would hear the General cursing. He cursed fluently, even with eloquence. He called upon God, the Mother of God, and indulged in all the blasphemies. A crash of glass might follow: they understood now that he was performing in the dining-room, breaking the glassware, throwing the plates to the floor.

Sometimes, leading Hector by the hand, Rodrigo would leave the bed, and like small, dusk ghosts these two would glide out of their room and steal silently toward the room where their father displayed his magnificent anger. Peering through the crack of a partly opened door they could see him at last, and see their mother trembling before him.

They could see her pale face and her eyes set very large in the surrounding pallor, her hair in disarray, falling in sable despair over her shoulders. There was a degree of wild beauty in her frightened distress, but they were not old enough to perceive it. The tears in her eyes, in some obscure way, amused them. They never pitied her.

Nevertheless, her fortune brought her certain hours of supremacy. The yellow fever came and Rodrigo was ill of it, and then he forgot his heroic father and wanted only his mother near. He craved her presence continually, and she did not fail him. Every hour she was close at his bed; she wet his lips with lime and water; she bathed his face; she held his flaming head against her cool breast. In spite of her fear she was happy

then; this was her rôle and none but she sufficed for it. When Rodrigo grew better he forgot the tender hours of her ministrations.

## II

It was shortly after Rodrigo's illness that the woman Belen came to live in the house. She found this home because the General's wife was easy of compassion. She pitied all suffering; that was her great weakness. Belen's husband was stabbed in a brawl, when he was drunk. The brawl was the culmination of a vigorous argument among friends; the argument concerned itself with some question in philosophy, but no one remembered the exact problem afterward. Belen's husband died of his wound and left no properties.

It was a case for the mother's compassion. Belen was her friend and tears grew easily in her eyes when she contemplated her friend's plight.

"Unhappy woman!" she said to herself. "She has no home, no one to care for her! Suppose this misfortune happened to me!"

She brought her friend into her own home.

It was a good act, she thought, and doing good acts made her happy, and more than bringing her happiness, they brought her a sense of assurance. It seemed to her that in doing a good thing she made a sort of bargain with God; in an obscure way she put God on His honor to repay her out of His own bounty.

Belen became one of the household, and soon the General began to observe her. She was not a beautiful woman, nor even pretty, but the General demanded little more of women than propinquity and their sex.

If Belen was not handsome, she was practical; she had an eye to her material advantages. In the ogling of the General she saw the chance of a greater security. With her strong, practical character she had soon

learned to despise the General's wife, who was too weak, too ready with her sentimentalities, to be admired. Would it not be easy to displace her? Belen conceived it so.

She was seated one day in the patio when the General came out and approached her. He stood behind her chair and she provoked him with a smile. A scarlet bird winged away abruptly from the topmost frond of a palm and she raised her face to follow its passage with her eyes. The General bent over and seized her upturned face between his hands. She yielded, and met his lips with a kiss. He held her tightly for a moment and then released her abruptly.

Surprised, she turned and found that the mother had come out into the patio. She stood quite motionless, staring at this amorous enactment.

It came to her as an utter surprise, and for some seconds she was incredulous of her eyes. She had not suspected this, since she did not, by her nature, suspect ill of people. Then, realizing that an ill was done, she reacted in a very elemental way, in consonance with her simplicity. She grew passionately indignant, like a child who is struck in error, without provocation. Her indignation gave her a moment of courage, in which she ceased to fear the General.

She advanced toward the philanthropists with widely opened eyes and scarlet spots showing bright on her cheeks like symbols of her just cause.

"Ah!" she cried to Belen, "you unworthy one! You are without shame; Mother of God, but you are shameless! Look at me; I've been good to you and you take this chance to repay me. Now you'll go out on the streets to starve like one of the dogs; I wish much misfortune for you!"

The General had suffered his moment of astonishment, for the temerity of his wife, facing him so passionately, was a new thing to him. Yet he recovered swiftly. His thick

jaw grew hard and his frown enormous. He seized his woman by her shoulders and whirled her around like a helpless marionette. He pointed her toward the house and shoved her forward.

"Get into the house!" he muttered. "Get into the house! I'll teach you to spy on me!"

She spent the rest of the day in her room, bruised and in tears. Then she emerged. Her children needed her.

They did not need her, she knew, in the way that an infant needs a mother. Their need was less intimately physical, since they were older now, and yet she found herself immeasurably important to them. This was her saving idea; otherwise her home would have been unbearable.

The woman Belen remained in the house. The General was soon tired of his amour, and turned to newer faces, but he could not escape Belen's practical claim upon him. She was an efficient woman. She managed his affairs far more ably than his wife had done. She practised shrewd economies; she made the servants work; she handled the General's accounts; she collected his rents. He was free, like a liberated soul, from all practical concerns.

Perceiving these excellences in the usurper, the General's wife knew that now she would never go. Her hard practical face would be forever in the house like an embodied anathema. Why had this shameless event occurred? She asked the question of her God, and intimately asked Him to rid her of the woman. To augment the potency of these prayers she went to the Cathedral and deposited most of her jewels in the poor box; she lighted candles and kept them burning nightly before a large colored portrait of the Virgin. But God was indifferent.

However, while the presence of Belen was odious in the house, the mother grew, little by little, to despise this woman with an accompanying

sense of her own superiority. Her sense of superiority was derived from her children; Belen had no children. Belen had gained a cheap thing, a material advantage, whereas life had vouchsafed her its treasures, the jewels of all experience.

She grew, above everything, proud of her boys. Her pride sustained her in the daily affront of the other woman's presence. When she walked on the streets she observed the children of other women, and compared these with her own. None was superior, none was equal. She endowed her boys with fabulous qualities, transcendent superiorities. In this way, by these imaginings, she returned to her shaken belief in the goodness of her God. He had, in this bountiful way, answered all her years-long prayers.

She regretted, however, that her boys were growing older. Rodrigo was now ready to leave the University; he was nearly a man, and almost unapproachable. She hesitated to caress him, although her adoration craved expression in caresses. The eagerness of her kisses seemed to displease him. Nevertheless, although he escaped her arms, she smiled gently to herself whenever she was near him, feeling that he was still dependent. In every need he would come back to her and want only her, as in other days.

She wanted for Rodrigo every good fortune, and yet, in paradox, she almost wished some brief disaster for him, that she might once more minister to his need.

Hector, the next boy, grew now a little wild. He neglected his classes and sometimes, with other boys of his age, he drank fresh spirits secured from the farmers who visited the city on market days, and came home fuddled and silly. He was, in character, much like the General. His temper was ardent, his wants were imperative, and there was a strain of unscrupulousness in his soul. Refused money, he took the nearest suitable

thing from the house and sold it. These acts the General's wife concealed from her husband.

The younger boys, Alfredo and Eduardo, were still a little close to the mother. Yet, although she loved to hold them in her arms, to comfort them when they were ill, she longed more to kiss the older boys, since they were inaccessible. As they grew away from her she loved them more ardently.

### III

IN the last year of her life with the General she discovered that Rodrigo was in love with a girl. This was Gloria du Puoy, the daughter of the Minister of Education. Gloria was a beautiful girl, almost a blonde; her hair was copper and her complexion was scarcely tinted with the dark pigment of the tropics. She had a dozen lovers, but of these Rodrigo was the most ardent. Her loveliness obsessed him like a masterful lyric set in jeweled words. The mother knew that Gloria was beautiful, yet she was not, indeed, too lovely for Rodrigo!

She grew proud of Rodrigo's romance. It gave her pride to know how wanted was Gloria, how many young men attended her like the slaves of some old-time queen. No one would have her but her own son; of this she was assured.

At this time young Alejandro, the President's son, returned from his six years at school in France, and a gaudy reception was held in honor of his home-coming. The daughter of the Minister of Education was naturally present and when young Alejandro saw the girl he realized her charm and desired her.

Gloria was flattered; her sense of practical advancement was no doubt also aroused. She forgot her other lovers, her hesitations were over, she forgot Rodrigo. One day the papers suddenly told that Alejandro, the President's son, and Gloria du Puoy,

daughter of the Minister of Education, had been married by civil ceremony and the church service was to follow.

The General's wife read this one morning, and voicing a small cry of fear, she dropped the paper and hurried to Rodrigo's room. The bed was empty; he was not in the house. Had he learned the news?

She tried to devise some way to shield him from this news, but no expedient occurred to her. Later in the day, seated with her worries in her own room, the door was opened softly and Rodrigo came in on the tips of his toes. His face was red from running, there were smudges of dirt on his clothes as if he had crouched in dusty corners, and he peered from right to left, in the way of a fugitive.

"Is father at home?" he asked.

She told him no, waiting with her fearful alarms upon his own telling. He told her then that he had met Alejandro in the street, outside the Presidential Palace, and shot him.

"Maybe I've killed him," he said. "But unluckily, I think not. I shot too quickly; I hadn't enough calmness!"

In spite of her great fear, a terrible happiness came into the mother's heart. Her boy had come back to her again, with a great need!

She concealed him in her room and for days she kept him there, taking him food, giving him comfort. At last, one night, dressed in women's clothes, he was taken down to La Guayra and, by bribery, an outbound boat took him aboard. He reached New York and from there the General's wife received a letter and the great tension of her fears relaxed.

A few months later Edoardo, the youngest boy, entered the Academy, Hector had gone to the plantation, and Alfredo was in Paris, spending his father's money and, when time allowed, studying art.

The house was lonely now. It held only the steps of the servants and the



step of Belen as she went about from room to room, administering affairs. The General was in love with a dancer, stranded in the Capital from an Italian theatrical troupe. At this time he seldom came home.

A great longing came to the mother to see Rodrigo. He was, after all, her oldest and dearest boy. For the first time she admitted his ascendancy in her heart. Admitting this, the want of his nearness grew daily more unbearable. It affected her like a kind of sickness. She grew paler, she could not sleep at nights. The doctor fed her with tonics, dosed her with strychnine and iron; drugs did not avail.

At last, going to the General, the doctor informed him that his wife must have a change.

"She must leave the city, see some new sights, get a few months of a wholly different life. She is a sick woman."

The General had no compassion for her illness, but, as by an inspiration, he saw this as an opportunity to rid himself of her presence. He saw little of her, but the little that he was forced to see her, irked him. Her meekness aroused his temper, her piety had always enraged him.

He arranged, at last, that she should go to New York and join Rodrigo.

#### IV

SHE was physically sick during the sea-voyage, but her spirit began to heal. Her happiness increased. She dreamed, like a mistress dreaming of her lover, of the days approaching with her boy. She conceived a fabulous intimacy; she felt that his own want of her must be equal to her want of him.

When she found him waiting for her on the pier, she covered his face with kisses, so that she took his breath and deprived him, for an instant, of speech. He smiled indulgently at her caresses.

"Come," he said, "I must take you to my apartment!"

"You have an apartment now!" she exclaimed.

Then, smiling with happiness, she added:

"I understand! You have taken it for me!"

Rodrigo was silent.

They rode in a cab to the apartment, and when Rodrigo opened the door, the mother looked in and saw a young girl standing in the first room. She grasped Rodrigo's arm; her eyes grew large.

"Mother," he said, "this is Alice; this is my wife!"

The older woman, overwhelmed as in a great wave, by her disappointment, burst into tears, but she kissed the girl after a moment, and tried to talk to her. However, since neither knew the language of the other, they could not talk together; they could only smile, and nod their heads.

That night, stifling the bitterness of her emotions, the mother made a resolve. She resolved that she would learn to love the little blonde American. Alice would become her daughter. She had never had a daughter. Was little Alice not another of her children, a new child? Through her tears she smiled.

In the small apartment she did everything she could to help the girl. They had no servant and the older woman cooked, swept, mended. She did these things badly, because to this kind of work she was unaccustomed. But she was not to be denied. She felt a great duty to her children.

Finally Rodrigo came to her one day and said:

"Mother, we do not want to hurt you, but Alice must have more authority in her own little home. You must not take all the authority out of her hands. You don't understand the American girls, Mother. Alice wants to do her own things, the way she likes them done."

The older woman could not understand, but she ceased her activities; the days were full of long hours now. She tried to learn English, but the words eluded her. She used to sit,

watching Alice, and wonder about her thoughts; by the barrier of tongue they were all concealed.

At last Rodrigo found a room for her in a Spanish family, and her son and Alice were left to themselves. She went to see them as often as she dared, but her longing was not satisfied by these meagre visits. She began to think of returning to her own country. She wanted to see Hector and Edoardo. When was Alfredo coming back from Europe? She wrote letters to him; he did not trouble to answer.

It would not be easy, however, to go back. The General would not welcome her and, if he could, he would prevent her return. Perhaps he would refuse her money for the trip. It did not matter; she resolved to save, little by little, from the money that came each month. She began to save at once, denying herself a score of things, little amusements, little purchases. To save she ceased to eat at the common table, but cooked small dishes in her room. She was an old woman now; she was almost a spirit and needed, she argued, little food.

Finally, she confided her resolve to Rodrigo. He did not try to persuade her against it, and finding him so ready to lose her, she was deeply hurt. The tears filled her eyes and filmed them with an iridescence of moisture he did not observe.

He told her that her resolution was a good one.

"I have an opportunity in Chicago," he said. "Perhaps Alice and I will go there soon. You would not like to be there alone."

In the end this plan was accomplished and Rodrigo left the city with his wife. The old woman was alone. She remained in her room; she seldom went out. Sometimes she sat at the window, observing the street. She watched the crowds in passing; she heard the clamor of vehicles and the cries of a strange tongue. In this unfriendly place she was alone, sepa-

rate, lost to the ones she loved. She would turn from the window with a kind of fear; she could not bear the strange sights, the strange voices.

Her old illness had returned and she felt that she was growing weaker. Sometimes, awaking in her bed, she could not raise herself for a moment; all the strength seemed to have departed from her body. A great fear came to her, but she hid it from her thoughts. Nevertheless, it returned, like the spirit of a curse, and with this fear she often awoke in the night and stared into the dusk room with trembling lips.

The winter came, her room was badly heated. One morning she awoke and found herself unable to rise. One of the household came into the room later, and discovered her in a mild delirium. The doctor arrived and left medicines.

Her pneumonia was short. She did not linger as old people do with this disease. In her delirium her fear obsessed her with an overwhelming strength. She was never to see her children again! They were taken from her; they were stolen away; her God punished her for a terrible, unknown sin.

On the morning of the fourth day she opened her eyes and it seemed to her that someone was moving about in the room. A pale, red band of sunlight fell slantwise across the bed; winter sparrows quarreled outside her window. She turned her head and then she saw Rodrigo, and near him she saw her other boys, her four boys. She cried out with a great thankfulness and closed her eyes.

Later in the day, when the house was astir, they came into her room and found that she had died, some time between the night and the morning. They pitied her a little because she had died alone. Being Catholic people, they lit candles at her body and these burned in the silent room, commending her soul to her inscrutable God.

# The Symbolic Shoes of Mr. Bullis

*By Charles Divine*

## I

WHEN Richard Cameron was growing from a child into a boy he was called "Little Richard" and pointed out as one of the prodigies whose speaking ability won much decorous applause in the First Methodist Sunday School of Kentonville, where he startled the auditorium and enchanted his mother by "lovely recitations" beginning:

"You'd scarce expect one of my age  
To speak upon the public stage."

After reaching High School he continued his histrionic success to the extent of reciting such stirring things as that wild ride with "Love and Lasca down by the Rio Grande." . . . When he attained the senior class, his maturity demanding that he embrace more virile declamations, he thundered forth from the third floor rostrum a message of rhetorical potency to the effect that "Napoleon (pause) made his way to empire (long pause and breathe) over broken oaths and through a sea of blood. (Walk two steps.) But Toussant l'Ouverture (pause and rising inflection) never broke his word!"

It was at this time that Richard fell desperately in love with Cynthia Bradley, a wonderful girl, half Helen of Troy and half angel, the beauty of whose face, haunting him like a dream, consisted of regularity of outline, an oval without imperfection or flaw. Cynthia was imperial and aloof; the nearest he dared approach to her person was to place diffidently in her hands trite little poems of his own composition. Her critical equipment permitted her to

say they were "nice," but that was all. Yet Richard thrilled.

The ecstasy he poured into his poems was so reverent that it never allowed him to achieve sufficient fortitude to kiss Cynthia—an old-fashioned inhibition which tormented him as much as it puzzled her. Tall and regal, she walked with a graceful side-swing of the hips which Richard was too idealistic to think of as sensual. To him she was a being too ethereal for mundane attributes. He could not imagine her indulging in the physical functions of other mortals, the weaknesses that humbled one into being concerned about warm underwear or gargling the throat.

So far did she dwell above him—such was the spell of her beauty rather than the aristocracy of her family, for her father sold motorcycles for a living and rode in a Ford for pleasure—that Richard feared she could never accept any man's hand who wasn't as rich as Croesus or as princely as Richard Cœur de Lion. Still, remembering that faint heart never won fair maid, he put the proverb to the test one night and found his heart evidently still too faint, since Cynthia shook her head at his proposal, laughed gently, and sent him away.

That summer, in New York, began Richard's career among clerks in a busy office, where, because the senior partner was a friend of his fathers he received such aid and advice as enabled him, with the passing years, to become a "successful man," as the phrase obtained among his urbane associates. His metamorphosis took place among the towers of Manhattan and the week-ends of Long Island. He spent the years between twenty-five and thirty moving in

a set that was far more sophisticated than anything Kentonville knew, possessed of a stock of wines and worldliness in which environment his speaking ability found an outlet in telling smoking-room stories to men and making love to women. Then he went abroad for two years and came back with less enthusiasm for America and the courage of no convictions.

## II

CAMERON had finished dining at his hotel one evening, and was loitering over his coffee in that sweet state between languor and a cigarette, when his eyes roved over the room and rested for a moment on a woman at a nearby table. He thought there was something familiar about her, and yet his memory failed to hit upon it.

Her companion sat with his back toward Cameron, but beyond the man's shoulder he clearly saw the woman's beauty, head held high, throat gleaming white above the low neck of her gown. Suddenly it came to him that she was Cynthia Bradley, the sweetheart of his youth.

He nodded, and in reply a curious flicker passed over her features.

At once his mind was full of a hundred images he had thought he had long since forgotten, memories of Kentonville and a love-dream like an epic. . . . Somewhere he had heard that Cynthia had made a "good marriage," an alliance with a rich man, a figure of national importance, who had taken her away from the small town.

How timid he had been in those days! Scared to death of a beautiful woman.

Now, familiarity having bred poise, he could survey Cynthia calmly and remark the stereotyped beauty of her face, the regularity of contour which once he had thought so perfect, but which now lacked that interesting deviation from the commonplace he found more refreshing in faces. However, as far as he could see from where he sat, Cynthia was still Cynthia, regal and classic, inspiring him to reconstruct the old

romance in a fit of sentimental musing and entertain his thoughts with its possibilities.

Yes, he would like to make love to Cynthia again, now that she was a woman in the full flush of life and he was a man whose timidity had been overcome in the multitudinous contacts of New York, London and Paris.

As he saw her and her companion stir as if about to leave their table, Cameron himself arose and walked into the lobby, lingering in front of the newsstand to inspect the magazines, with one eye alert for the persons quitting the dining-room. In a few moments Cynthia appeared, strikingly beautiful, and from her side darted her companion to make a purchase at the cigar counter.

At once Cameron stepped forward.

"Cynthia," he said, smiling at her easily.

"Richard! I wasn't sure at first." She put her hand warmly in his.

"As beautiful as ever—which means more so, for now I'm no longer blind."

He saw that she could still blush; she also looked pleased.

"Do you know I'm married?" He nodded. "Alfred Bullis. You've heard of him?"

He sensed an impressiveness conveyed in her tone. He recalled the name in connection with a great tin-can corporation and a chain of savings banks, and the next moment he found Cynthia presenting him to her husband.

"An old friend from Kentonville," she explained. "It's been years, hasn't it, Richard?"

He nodded. His glance took in Mr. Bullis, perceiving a little round man wearing a bat-winged collar and a diminutive black cravat, above which loomed a face shaped like an equilateral triangle standing on its head: the base extending along the line of an extremely broad brow, the apex being his narrow, cleft chin. Between the two, his eyes, nose and mouth were contained within too restricted an area. But what struck Cameron's attention most was Mr. Bullis's footgear—black shoes striped with a tan overlayer ornately patterned with

many perforations, and surmounted by gray cloth tops adorned with pearl buttons.

Cameron wanted to laugh.

The idea of the queenly Cynthia being wedded to an idol whose pocketbook might be of gold but whose feet were of such clay, was too ludicrous for sobriety. The tawdry ornamentation so devoid of taste seemed to Cameron symbolic of all Mr. Bullis must be.

Good Lord! How she must have suffered, trying to dwell in a love-life with a creature so grotesque!

Cameron found Mr. Bullis eyeing him sharply and contributing no enthusiasm to his wife's invitation to call.

"Come to tea tomorrow. We're living in Park Avenue."

She gave him the number, and Cameron promised.

### III

HE thoroughly enjoyed his speculations the next afternoon as he walked leisurely toward Park Avenue to drink tea with Cynthia. It was the twenty-second of February and a holiday quietude hovered over shop fronts, though crowds, with an air *endimanché*, passed on foot and in motors. He was thinking of Cynthia when he turned a corner and approached one of the branches of the Bullis Savings Bank.

Pausing to contemplate this institution belonging to Cynthia's husband, he saw in a glass frame affixed to the barred window a large photograph of George Washington, fittingly displayed for the holiday. Under it, in companionable prominence, were some words written by Alfred Bullis, who was often given to inventing slogans and platitudes about business. Curious, Cameron read the tribute to the father of his country:

*"The founder of the greatest stock company of his time, with its resources of over eighty billions, the savings of the 105,000,000 stockholders of the U.S.A."*

Cameron smiled. Words by Alfred Bullis, he thought to himself; the tune was the Star Spangled Banner—da-dee, da-da-da-a! So that was what

George Washington was to Alfred Bullis, rather than a human being who had red hair under his solemn wig and who spelled window "winder."

He was sure Cynthia must have been surfeited with such banalities by now, a conclusion that appeared to be true when he reached her apartment and was ensconced opposite the tea-wagon. It was evident that Cynthia wanted to be told all the little details Cameron could remember of the romantic feeling he once had for her. Her enjoyment of his reconstructed pictures led him to enlarge on them, turning a hazy incident into a definite ecstasy, an airy nothing into a substantial rapture. The worldliness he had won since those days lent lustre to his style.

"These are things we must talk about again, Richard."

She settled back in her chair in an attitude suddenly formal, transmitting to him a vague sense of disturbance. Her conversation began to run in channels so patently complacent that he expected every moment she was going to laugh at her own words, when suddenly and quietly appeared the figure of Mr. Bullis.

Cameron smiled to himself. Mr. Bullis's entrance, which Cynthia had evidently surmised, had been accomplished with such soft steps of his black, tan and gray shoes that it savored of coming stealthily upon an intrigue.

Mr. Bullis looked slightly puzzled, as if the fact that Cameron was not holding Cynthia in his arms had upset his calculations. To Cameron it seemed now that Mr. Bullis's gaudy shoes had become the symbol of vigilance, of one who watched his wife as carefully as he did his investments.

There was more hostility than hospitality in his manner, and Cameron soon rose to leave. As he walked into the hall, accompanied by Cynthia, she said to him in a low voice:

"Do you want to drop in tomorrow night? At nine? Alfred's going to Cincinnati."

He nodded, struck by her sudden breathlessness.



Waiting for the maid, who had mislaid his things, he had an opportunity of looking deeply into Cynthia's eyes and seeing a singular light there.

"At nine," she whispered, and her hand lingered caressingly in his.

He went up the avenue, his heart singing. What did he care now about the trip he had planned to Bermuda? Far more interesting would be this excursion into an old romance. The queenly Cynthia, confessing that she "liked to be told nice things," was at last to surrender her imperial coldness before him.

Already he pictured the scene: the dim lights, Cynthia in a softly clinging gown, a faint perfume, and a smothered cry. . . . For this he must bring her a prettily fashioned speech, flowery and anacreontic, not too subtle, not too flip-pant, but an efficacious preamble that would transport him, at the moment of his arrival, from the threshold of civil-ities to the fragrance of Cynthia's side.

## V

HE found her, not in the drawing-room, but in that curtained enclosure beyond, resting full-length on a chaise-longue, one arm dangling over the side in the glow of a shaded lamp. Yes, the scene was as he had hoped: the dim lights, the white beauty of her throat, the clinging gown, which seemed more-over to be a garment exceedingly *intime*, such as a goddess might wear, seques-tered from the world, in a mood of languorous relaxation.

Cameron stood still, looking across the room at her, and decided that this moment was not a whit too soon to plunge into his overture.

"Oh, what a vision!" he exclaimed. . . . He thought to himself: "That's not very original!" . . . "I seem to see you, Cynthia, back in a soft summer evening in Kentonville, with lilacs in the lane." . . . He wondered if this was a botanical as well as a geographical error, since he couldn't remember lilacs in summer or any lane in Kentonville. Yet the thought appealed to him

as one of poignant poesy; and he continued without allowing his subconscious thoughts to retard his speech. "Oh, Cynthia, the bewitchment that fell upon me in those days still holds me enslaved." His speech was proceeding as prepared, in the declamatory manner first perfected on the creaky rostrum of the old High School; and Cynthia was listening eagerly, drinking in his words.

"The romance that I dreamed of, looking into your eyes, watching your movements, your lips; the memory of your beauty and my infatuation, all this I knew would go—" He had been about to say "echoing down the corridors of time," but rejected it as smacking too bombastically of Congressmen and made a swift substitution—"down the vista of the years, wounding my heart with a monotonous languor." . . . He thought: "I guess that's Verlaine." . . . "All this love, I concluded, Cynthia, was doomed to go unrequited, unfulfilled. But now, standing here and looking at you, stretched out before me like a goddess awaiting the caress that shall make her mortal, I can only think how exquisite you are!" He saw her lean forward, a light like a halo floating over her face, a sublime luminosity of anticipation. It was time to hurry his rhetoric and, rising to the climax, to rush across to her gleaming arms. . . . "Oh, Cynthia, all this love, this passion, this hot surge of youth—"

Now he was reaching the crest of the wave, and she was waiting, lips parted and enraptured, when all at once his gaze fell on an incongruous note of color under the blue curtains.

He caught his breath.

Startling, surreptitious and ominous, protruded the black, tan and gray shoes of Mr. Bullis!

Cameron's mind received an immediate jolt, which would have shattered the speech of one possessed of less aplomb. However, he was too quick-witted to let his discovery of the other's presence betray him or halt his flow of words for more than a fraction of a second. Cynthia, unaware of what he saw beneath the curtains, owing to an intervening

table, had evidently interpreted the momentary catching of his breath as a symptom of emotional intensity. She leaned forward, expectant. But Cameron, trained by other crises when a sudden deprivation of a memorized speech had forced him into invention, merely transferred his words for the moment from his conscious to his subconscious mind, and repeated aloud:

"All this hot surge of youth." . . . He wondered desperately if Mr. Bullis was holding a revolver behind that bulge in the curtain, where the black, tan and gray shoes were now sharply symbolic of uxorious watchfulness and the sanctity of the home. . . . "All this hot surge of youth," he continued, suddenly changing his theme without in the least impairing his lingual effluence, "now reminds me how life can alter each one of us. In those old days I thought I was worthy of your love." . . . He noticed a bewildered look on Cynthia's face. . . . "But now I see how unworthy I am. You have advanced beyond me, spiritual and sacrosanct. You have found faith and happiness." . . . Her expression grew distinctly puzzled. . . . "And I realize that any attempt to evoke a past that is dead for you and unattainable for me can only result in my humiliation and your pity." The halo had fled from her face. "Oh, yes," he added hurriedly, fearing she might interrupt him to correct his misunderstanding of her feelings, "I know you are kind" (he thought to himself:

"He hasn't shot yet, thank God!"), "as kind as a friend or a brother, and that you are justly proud of your husband, one of the great men of our country. I appreciate your nobility in remembering me, even as I realize at the same time that I can never see you again, never! But the thought of your goodness will always go with me." He was stepping backward toward the door, leaving Cynthia stunned and speechless. "Good-bye, Cynthia, good-bye!"

He melted from the room of mellow lights and slipped swiftly down the hall, seizing his hat and coat and stepping out through the door to the corridor. The elevator bore him to the street, where he paused at the curb and breathed deeply.

"Whew! That was a close call!"

He started back to his hotel, determined to pack up and leave for Bermuda at once.

## V

BACK in the dimly lit room, Cynthia still sat on the chaise-longue, perplexed.

At length she sighed, glanced around the room, and, stretching out one long white arm, rang the bell for the maid.

"Annie!" she complained, with a casual gesture. "How often must I remind you of your carelessness?"

"Oh, excuse me, Ma'am! The telephone interrupted me just when I started to put away Mr. Bullis's things."

She went over to the curtains and picked up the black, tan and gray shoes.



LOVE is like a well: a good thing to drink out of, but a bad thing to fall into.



# Semper Fidelis

By Carter Brooke Jones

## I

MR. BLODGETT, philosopher by divine appointment, carpenter by vocation and night watchman by necessity, shuffled reluctantly out of the tiny office, with its drowsy stove, its slumbering cat, its modest air of security. He pushed into the uncertain night, which was damp and cold, his lantern throwing grotesque shadows over the vague shapes that filled the plant, where wooden ships were built.

He paused before an embryonic monster that, reared on one of the ways, hovered as if it hardly could wait until it was ready to plunge into the bay, whose waters softly lapped the piles below. He held his lantern up at the great ribs of wood.

A ship, he pondered, was a skeleton before it was born; a man, after he died. Which, he wondered, was the better? He gave it up. Since you had to be a skeleton one time or another, it didn't matter much when.

After all, he told himself, ships and men were a great deal alike. This schooner one day would slip down the ways and into the bay, and later on would glide out to sea. It would seem to be free, riding the great waves, cruising the Seven Seas, shoving its nose into all the ports of the world, perhaps—just as men seemed free. But men would own it, command it, guide it, hold it in slavery, always. It would leave on its first voyage loaded to the rails of the deck with lumber, and after that, barring some accident, it would sail for many years, groaning under the weight of cargoes, until there would come a time when it would be beached on some

obscure inlet for the tides to rot away.

It would have no will of its own; men would decide every move it made. And why not? It was theirs; they made it; they were its gods. Men would not be unkind to the schooner. They simply would treat it as they treated themselves. What could be fairer?

Take him, Tom Blodgett. His life had been like that. How much had he had to say about what he would do?

When he was a boy he had wanted to fish and loaf through the pastures and woods. They had made him go to school, run errands and "be a little man."

As a youth he had wanted to love. They had made him marry and raise a family. Then, when his children grew up, they had made him responsible for them.

"They're your children," they told him. "You insisted on having them. See that they behave."

And when a restless son had reached the point where he was quiet, orderly, what they called a useful citizen, they sent him away in the army and had him killed.

His daughter had happened to be pretty. So much the worse for her. She had a love affair, and for some reason or other didn't marry her lover. They shunned her, and informed Mr. Blodgett that if he were any sort of a man he'd fix her seducer. Mr. Blodgett couldn't quite see why. Then some other pale young man stepped in and wanted to marry the girl. She didn't like him, but her mother and her mother's friends persuaded her it was the only way to redeem herself from hell. The marriage followed. Daughter had

been miserably unhappy, as Mr. Blodgett had known she would be, and now she looked like the wrath of God—there was no trace of the little girl who had been so ready to laugh.

Mr. Blodgett had loved his wife when they were children of nineteen. Now he hated her, because she found fault with everything he did and much he didn't do. He couldn't leave her. She often reminded him that a law would send him to jail if he didn't stay with her and support her, and sometimes he thought of trying jail for a while.

He had craved companionship, and they had made him join labor unions, lodges, go to church, vote a straight party ticket, do many things that bored him.

He had felt like wandering—he didn't care where or how—and all the years he had been tied to one spot. He could have broken loose, run away. That was true. But what was the use? You couldn't escape the ways of men. You might make your getaway from your family and your job, but you'd find yourself in some other situation just as bad, perhaps worse.

He had tried the radical organizations, but they were the bunk, he considered. They were eager to replace the present order with rules and customs fully as tedious. The anarchists had the right idea, but they, too, were fools, because they had no way of making their dreams come true.

No, a man might as well keep his mouth closed and pretend he liked it. That was the easiest method of getting along with other men.

Eventually Mr. Blodgett poked his way back to the office, and settled himself with a sigh of comfort. He stirred up the stove, and slumped back in his chair to doze. The cat raised its head tentatively, then curled back to sleep.

Mr. Blodgett jumped half out of his chair with the muscular reflex of a startled consciousness. A man stood in the doorway—a sallow-faced, odorous, ill-conditioned man. He held a revolver in the direction of Mr. Blodgett.

"Now then," said the visitor, "is there anything in that safe?"

Mr. Blodgett, once over his surprise, was not particularly afraid. He studied the matter. It must be viewed from every angle.

He couldn't reach his own revolver. The fellow had the drop on him. He might as well submit. There wasn't anything valuable in the safe, anyway.

But suddenly he thought of a worn-out, discarded boat rotting away on some obscure inlet—a vessel that ever since it was launched had been weighted down, driven, pushed, ordered about, required to be like all other ships the world over.

"I wouldn't wonder at all," said Mr. Blodgett, "if there wasn't quite a lot."

"Then lemme at it," advised the intruder.

"If I don't," interposed Mr. Blodgett, "will you shoot?"

"Just try me and see, you old——!"

So Mr. Blodgett sprang at him. There was a shot.

## II

THE next afternoon the papers printed Mr. Blodgett's picture with captions like this:

*Aged Night Watchman Slain  
Defending Company's Property*

After telling how the bandit had been frightened away before he had drilled through the safe, one report went on to quote Mr. Blodgett's employer: ". . . He knew the safe contained but \$3.20 and some worthless papers. Yet, with his stern sense of duty, he gave up his life rather than surrender what little there was."

The following morning an editorial was devoted to Mr. Blodgett. It concluded: ". . . And such men are typical Americans—the bulwarks of our great republic."

At the funeral the tributes were profuse. Among them was a wreath from Mr. Blodgett's lodge. It was inscribed: *Semper Fidelis*.

# A Reformed Man

*By John C. Cavendish*

I

**I**N a week he would be out of the prison. Again and again he assured himself of his approaching liberation, and yet the event seemed unreal, like a dream. He ate from the half-cleaned plates, he worked at the rasping machines, he walked in step with a file of men who marched as one man and this seemed the only reality.

The prison, he felt, had interred his spirit, and changed the quality of his blood. It no longer flowed through his veins with a sort of mad urge. He looked back upon his old self like one surveying a stranger. He recalled his old beliefs, some of the rebel aphorisms that he had invented to justify his life. They brought no stir, they held no meaning.

Alone in his cell at night he tried to seize hold of reality as if it were a ponderable thing. He wanted to plan something for himself, contrive the means of life when he should be free.

"What I want," he said to himself, "is quiet, the chance to think. I've been buried for two years. My coming back will be as miraculous to myself as a resurrection. I certainly won't see things with the old eyes. The old relations of things no longer hold; I must construct a new world."

Finally he was called to the warden's office and given a suit of clothes. The warden shook hands with him and said:

"You're an intelligent man, Truesdale. You're different from most of the men here. Prison's probably done

you some good; gave you a chance to think, didn't it?"

Truesdale nodded, mechanically.

"Most of the men locked up here haven't had the brains to fit themselves into the world. You have. These fellows haven't had the sense to play according to the rules, but it's a whole lot easier, if you have sense, to follow the rules than to try to buck them. Probably you know that now."

He said good-bye to the warden, thinking of him as a conceited and ignorant man, and crossing the yard he was passed through the small, iron door that opened onto the street. Up and down the street, like the fortifications of an antique city, ran the prison walls, diminishing in perspective. Truesdale was free.

He felt in his pocket and drew out a card upon which was written a man's name and address. This card had been given him by the warden.

"Go to that man," the warden had said, "and ask him if he can give you work. It's often hard for a man going out to find work, but this is a gentleman without prejudices. He's willing to help anyone that I recommend."

Truesdale scanned the name, shifting his weight from foot to foot in indecision. In the end he accepted his necessity. He knew of no other place to go.

He boarded a trolley car and seated himself in an empty seat. The men and women in the car interested him. Their clothes seemed novel, their gestures and their talk were new to him. They appeared strangely free from



restraint, like spirits liberated from the flesh.

Truesdale smiled. He remembered, suddenly, his old way of looking at people and the contrast of his new impression with the old amused him. Once he had been full of contempt for the people of everyday actions, going about on their tame enterprises. It was the memory of the prison life, he observed, that endowed these people with their present aspect of zest and liberation. They were free—a rare and astonishing state.

He left the car at the business quarter of the city and there he mingled with the crowds, hastening and slowing his step, and finding pleasure in this exercise of his volition. He looked into the faces of men and women, and into the windows of stores, and at the shifting movement of the street with some of the wonder of a child. His preoccupation made him pass by the address he sought; he had to turn back and return.

He walked into an office building and was carried up in the elevator. Pausing at the door of a broker's office, he read the name several times and then walked in. A girl behind a railing, looked at him inquiringly.

"Is Mr. Burke in?" he asked.

"Who shall I say is calling?" she asked.

"Please give him this card," said Truesdale.

When the girl returned Truesdale followed her into an inner office. Mr. Burke was a tall man, with a thin and frigid face, given an intellectual touch by a pair of nose glasses.

"I've just come out," Truesdale explained, "and I must find work somewhere. I'll do anything if you have any work for me to do."

"It has been my policy," said Burke, with a sort of oratorical air, "to help men of your sort, Truesdale. That is to say, men of a certain amount of intelligence who have got themselves into prison through some early weakness. I know about you; the

warden has written me a letter. Maybe I can find you a place here."

Truesdale smiled, but back of his smile he felt uncomfortable. There was something depressing to him in the man whom he confronted, an unresiliency of mind that he sensed and disliked. He revolted a little against the clear hardness of this man's mind, but his own mind was dull and confused and he could not understand his vague emotions.

Mr. Burke pressed a button at the side of his desk and a young girl came into the office.

"Miss Hart," said Burke, "this is Mr. Truesdale. From now on Mr. Truesdale will work here. For the present he'll help you in filing reports. You'll teach him what he is to do."

Truesdale thanked the thin-faced man and left his office. He followed behind the girl and together they entered a long and narrow concrete vault, lighted with electric lamps. The walls of the vault were lined with steel filing cabinets. There were several small desks in the chamber.

"I'm sort of a librarian here," said the girl. "We have thousands of reports, statistical reports, on iron and steel and all sorts of commodities. I'm behind in my work already. I'm mighty glad I'm to have some help."

She spoke in a low, mild voice, a little mechanically. She kept her eyes down, and Truesdale felt that she was embarrassed in talking with him. He looked at her. He observed that she was small, brown-haired, brown-eyed, and mildly pretty. She had a soft and pretty mouth, from which the words explaining those dry details of her occupation seemed to drop incongruously. He nodded as she explained, and now and then said "yes," and "I understand," but he felt a constraint in talking with her.

During all the rest of the day Truesdale was troubled with this feeling of constraint. He felt it not only in relation to the little girl, but to his surroundings, his whole outlook. He was free of the prison, but his spirit

was not free. The step of men, walking in a line all in one pace, still sounded in his ears and he remembered the deep dull silence of his cell. That silence seemed to come into the vault and into the busy clatter of the outer office, stilling the noises of these places like an immense cloak dropped over everything. Truesdale's sense of reality was disturbed. He lived like one outside the order of things, as if in a fourth dimension.

## II

TRUESDALE soon learned the little trick of the work he had to do and performed it like a machine. The girl worked near him; they did not talk together. They scarcely spoke during the day. Late in the afternoon the sound of her voice startled him when she said:

"We can't do much more now, Mr. Truesdale. It's almost closing time. We'd better get things in order for tomorrow."

He nodded.

"What time do we open in the morning?" he asked.

She told him and then added in a timid way:

"Do you live far from here?"

"I don't live anywhere," he answered. "Not yet. . . ."

Her small mouth opened a little and her eyes rounded in surprise. Then he realized that she knew nothing about the prison. It surprised and pleased him to realize this.

"I . . . I just came to the city today," he added.

She smiled understandingly.

"Then you'll have to find somewhere to live this evening, won't you? I have no people here in the city; I'm alone too. I have a room and I take my meals out in different places."

"Do you suppose that I could rent a room in the place where you live?" Truesdale asked her.

It seemed to him that his question embarrassed her a little; he thought that her round cheeks colored slightly, and

she answered after a brief hesitation.

"I don't know," she said. "Would you like to ride home with me and see?"

He nodded and felt relieved. The practical details of life strangely frightened him; he found himself without capacity and without resourcefulness, like a lost child. So he waited until Miss Hart appeared, wearing a small, furry turban, and together they left the offices of Burke, the broker. They went down into the street, that was filled with an immense number of people and the conflicting noises of many voices, running feet, bells and horns and whistles blowing on distant factories. Truesdale shrank a little as he walked out to the pavement.

They descended to the Subway and fought for the car as if for some precious goal. Inside, Truesdale turned and found his companion straightening her hat and tucking up the disengaged wisps of her hair. Her cheeks were flushed. She smiled at him.

The simple friendliness of her smile gave him a curious feeling of security. He felt less alone, less outside the order of things. He felt grateful to the girl, yet, even while he experienced this emotion, he smiled a little to himself in irony. In a retrospective moment he could see himself as he was before the prison, charged with excesses and a sort of mad desire for life. In those days he used to tell himself that the greatest of all achievements was to live life completely, with abandon. Now he clung to a girl, like a child to its mother. Now he was afraid of life!

They left the car at a street walled in with a double row of old, brick houses. There were small cards in nearly every window, advertising rooms to let; the vestibule doors were standing open; men and women, without the air of proprietorship, went in and came out of these houses.

The girl's landlady received Truesdale affably. He paid her for his room, a week in advance and found himself enclosed in a small cube filled almost entirely with the bed, a bureau, and

several old chairs. He walked up and down this room several times then, going to the door, looked out into the hall.

Near the end of the hall Miss Hart emerged from her room and advanced toward him. She still wore the small turban circled with imitation seal and when she saw him looking out at her she again evidenced her slight shyness.

"I'm going out to have my dinner," she said.

Truesdale smiled in a friendly way.

"Do you take your meals near here?" he asked.

"Well, there is a little restaurant two blocks away that is better than some of them. I usually go there. You don't know anything about the restaurants near here, do you, Mr. Truesdale?"

She dropped her eyes and added, diffidently.

"Maybe you'd like to go with me."

Truesdale could not think of any words with which to put her off. For the first time since his delivery from the prison he experienced a flush of rebellious strength. His mood became hard; he felt himself alone, and because of his isolation, at secret war with everyone, and all accepted institutions.

"Miss Hart," he said, "I may as well tell you the truth, because you're bound to learn it from someone. You shouldn't have brought me here, because that may compromise you, and I'm not the sort of man that you should know. Do you remember, I said a little while ago that I'd just come to the city today? Well, that was half a lie, because I've been in the city for the last two years. The only thing is, I've been in prison!"

He saw her shrink a little and her little shrinking gesture confirmed his mood. He stared at her with hard eyes.

"Even if I hadn't told you this," he continued, "I wouldn't have gone out to eat with you. I couldn't. When they discharge you from prison they give you a little money. I just gave that money to our landlady."

The girl looked straight into his face. She drew in a quick breath.

"What do you intend to do?" she asked.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Probably Burke will give me an advance tomorrow," he said.

Then she surprised him by seizing his arm.

"You can't go without eating anything all day!" she exclaimed. "And . . . I'm not the sort of girl you imagine. I'm not afraid of you. I don't care what people think about me. I don't care if you have been in prison. You need somebody to help you; you've got to let somebody help you!"

She spoke quickly, excitedly; her voice rose in pitch as she spoke and nearly broke on her final words. In her earnestness she forgot to be shy.

Truesdale was confused; he felt a little ashamed.

"It's good of you to say that," he mumbled.

Something of his former weakness and uncertainty returned to him, like a fatigue. He heard her saying that she would help him; in spite of her physical frailty she seemed strong. She wanted to lend him money, forced him to accept some money from her. He obeyed, in a mechanical way. They left the house together.

Then, when they were sitting in the little restaurant eating a cheap dinner, she asked him to tell her something about the prison and, more especially, how that misfortune happened upon him.

"It happened because of a fight," Truesdale said.

"Did someone attack you? Did they accuse you unjustly?"

He smiled, inwardly, at the mild innocence of her mind.

"But you don't understand," he said to her. "I'm not a victim; nobody accused me unjustly. I fought with a fellow on the street; finally I hit him over the head with a piece of wood and fractured his skull. He was a long

time recovering, several months, I think."

Her brown eyes examined his face intently. She found him half fabulous and she frowned a little in her effort to understand him.

"But why did you do that?" she asked.

"Because I was drunk; I was drunk at the time."

She did not answer, but continued to look at him, the puzzled frown deepening in her white forehead. Suddenly, Truesdale lost his indifference, it dropped from him like a garment and left him exposed with a desire to justify himself. She was recoiling from him, she was repelled away. He did not want to lose her!

"Maybe you can't understand the sort of fellow I was," he said, quickly. "Somehow, I couldn't be tame. I hated rules. When anyone told me a thing must be done, that antagonized me. I was unruly—like a wild animal. I wanted to have experiences, and there wasn't an experience in life to which I was indifferent. Do you know, even when I found myself in jail, locked up and waiting for trial, I felt a sort of a hot joy, like a man in love might feel if he were about to meet with his beloved. I saw the prison as a great experience. I didn't care if they convicted me. Yes, the prison was an experience!"

Something of the perplexity went out of the girl's face. Her eyes softened and drew moist; her lips relaxed.

"I pity you," she said. "The prison must have been dreadful. You didn't understand. But even if it was dreadful, it's been a great thing for you, hasn't it? It's changed you, it's given you reason, hasn't it?"

He sensed her belief, and swiftly hastened to confirm it. For an instant he was sincere.

"Yes, yes, indeed. It made me see life in a different way. I'm beginning all over again, beginning a new life now."

In the moment of speaking these words he believed them. Just for a

second it seemed to him that the doubt had gone out of his spirit like something dusk that had taken wing, and the old restlessness had left his blood. Then he saw this conviction as an illusion. He was still in doubt. He felt as he had felt in the morning, coming out of the prison. He did not know what to expect of life, nor how he would act. He was still detached; the stream had not caught him up.

He was still detached, save in respect to this girl. She was the first event of his new life, the first orientation. To hold her now, not to lose her now when he felt an emphatic need of her, he was willing to sacrifice some of his honesty. He understood her soft sentimentalities. It pleased her to regard him as a sinner, reclaimed through suffering. He tried to play that rôle, act out the part she chose for him. He spoke contritely and in his words elaborated humiliations that he did not feel.

When they left the restaurant she took his arm. This gentle confidence soothed him. They walked in silence; he was willing to be silent, experiencing a camaraderie in this absence of speech. She disengaged her arm as they entered the rooming-house.

They ascended the stairs together. He paused at his door, and she half turned, half faced him. A genuine tenderness was in his spirit. He wondered if he could kiss her; would she fight out of his arms?

"She might be offended if I kissed her," he said to himself.

"Good-night," he whispered.

"Good-night," she replied.

He opened the door and went into his room.

For a while the smallness of the place oppressed him, as if the air were less than enough to breathe. He lay on his bed and wanted a spacious place, not even the enclosure of any walls, whatever their breadth, but something as broad as the world, and a mighty sense of freedom. Then he thought of the girl, her simplicity and her gentleness and her shy ways. He wondered,

as you might wonder about a stranger, whether the prison had really changed him.

### III

He went to work the next day fighting his former sense of unreality. There was nothing to grasp; he could not grasp any order of things, nor find in himself some emphatic urge to show the way of his life. When he came in he found the girl already at her desk. She smiled at him; he thought there was a warmth in her smile. It astonished him to discover so much pleasure at the sight of her and for a time he worked with an unusual feeling of ease.

At noon he walked through the crowds alone. He was talking to himself, under his breath. He scarcely saw any of the faces that passed him, hardly distinguished one sex from the other. He told himself that he had no interests, nothing to bind him, not a tie. Where was the old interest, the old broad interest that might be summed up in saying that he loved life with a kind of madness? He could not tell; perhaps it had gone out of him in the prison, like the transpiration of a subtle essence. The only thing that promised an interest was the girl, Emily, with her curious sweetness and her curious gentleness. She attracted him. He wondered whether he would be drawn to her more and more, until he would cease to analyze her and his imagination would endow her with qualities that would be fabulous and romantic. He almost desired, by a fiat of will, to force himself into love with her.

They were together nearly every evening. As the weeks passed, Truesdale found the cheap little amusements she enjoyed. She liked the moving pictures and Truesdale took her to see them. The cinema dramas did not amuse him; he found them illogical and unreal. But it pleased him to give Emily amusement. It gave him an hour of contentment to sit in a darkened theatre, near Emily. Now and then he looked at her face and in the sentiment-

tal moments of the play he often caught the opal glitter of tears brimming in her eyes. This simplicity warmed him.

He felt more and more the need of her presence. She gave him, when near, his sole hours of contentment. Alone he was harassed with a restlessness that he could not explain. Desires that would not shape themselves into recognizable images plagued him. Sometimes he experienced an emotion of intolerable restraint, as if physical bonds bound him tightly to a certain place. When he joined Emily his ease returned to him.

He believed, sometimes, that he loved her.

One evening, coming out of a picture theatre, they walked together into one of the small city parks. It was a little late, and only a figure, here and there remained in the park. The girl took his arm and Truesdale imagined he could feel some of the warmth of her small body emanating to his own.

A sudden idea possessed his mind. Was all his uneasiness only the expression of his love for the girl? Was there some flame he was dimming and restraining? It seemed to him then that he must hold her in his arms and say passionate words to her. That would liberate him, that would give life back to him.

He stopped and she turned her face, looking up at him. He drew her close and felt her soft hair touching his cheek. She accepted his kiss like something long expected. She pressed her face against his arm, hiding her eyes.

"I knew you would kiss me," she said. "Dear heart, I've been waiting for you to tell me. Then you've really learned to love me; you love me as much as I love you?"

He scarcely heard her murmured words. A great astonishment took hold of him. No miracle had happened. In kissing her he felt a certain tenderness, scarcely more tenderness than he felt when she smiled at him, or sat near him in the dark. Her lips had not aroused him; his blood was cold.

When he did not speak, she raised



her face and looked up, searching for his eyes. He dropped his arms; she drew back a little in surprise. He gazed down at the pebbled walk under his feet.

"There's a mistake," he said, slowly.

"What is it?" she cried.

He raised his eyes and met her startled gaze. He pitied her and thought for a second that his pity was strong enough to make him lie to her. Yet he told her the truth.

"I don't love you," he said. "When I kissed you I found I didn't love you. This is a terrible thing—to bring you any unhappiness!"

He saw her shoulders droop; she swayed and he thought she would fall. He sprang forward to catch her, but when his fingers touched her arms, she stiffened, the muscles of her arms drew tense.

"Don't touch me!" she whispered.

Truesdale drew back. He turned slowly and walked off through the park. He walked for a long time through the streets until he noticed that he had come down into the city and was mingling with the night crowds.

On one of the corners he joined a little knot of men and women who were gathered about a fellow beating upon a big drum. The man beat his drum in the street, and two women, dressed in wrinkled blue uniforms, stood on either side of him singing a hymn.

The man stopped beating on the drum and began to preach. He told how he had lain in the gutter, drunk, and seen the grace of God. He said he had been a sinner, but the blood of Christ had washed him clean. Then he pleaded with the crowd, mixing threats with his pleadings. He threatened them with hell, and told them that if they scoffed now at hell they would not scoff in the grave, when the fires of damnation licked at them eternally.

His face grew red, the veins of his neck were engorged, his cheeks puffed out like a bellows. He roared in a great hoarse voice that filled the whole street with his conviction. Then he took to pounding the drum again, and the

women sang again in thin, tremulous voices.

Truesdale turned away and walked on. He envied the man with the drum, for the fire of his conviction. This man understood God, and comprehended the order of things. He knew right and wrong and recognized justice and sin.

"It doesn't make any difference what you believe," Truesdale muttered to himself, "as long as you believe something—with enough emphasis!"

He came to the river, walked half way across the bridge and looked down into the dusk water.

Looking into the water, it seemed to him that he was summing up the collective experience of a whole race of men like himself, a company of rebel men, disengaged from the rut and ease of safety, and moving through the dull firmament of orbital things like undirected meteors. He felt that many men of his own soul must have stood in this way, upon a similar spot, alone in the night, regarding the dark waters. A sense of fatality came over him, as if he had heard an oracular utterance.

He thought of Emily; the thought of her gave him a great sadness. He found himself without a belief, or a single illusion. No one could live without illusions.

He slowly climbed over the iron railing, poised himself an instant on the outer edge, and then jumped down into the water. In the second of falling, he believed that the water would close over him, and that he would not struggle.

But he came to the surface automatically. The chill water ran down over his face; the chill was all about him and invigorated him. Lights shone far down the river, like souls; the dark buildings on the river banks cast curious shadows. There was the vague sound of voices, far away. The mystery of the night was poignant, like the effect of something passionately loved. Truesdale struck out into the water, swimming shoreward with hard, pulling strokes.

The color and the variety of the night overwhelmed him, like a revelation.

His blood was swift and hot in his veins. Alone, he felt immensely strong.

He reached the bank and pulled himself out of the water. It dropped down from his clothes in a hundred small streams. He stood with wide eyes, staring about him. Below, at a bend in the river, he heard the sudden, wailing whistle of a locomotive. He waited beside the tracks that followed the river. The engine turned the curve and approached slowly. It passed, pulling behind a great train of box cars.

Resolving swiftly, Truesdale ran a

little beside the train, then, leaping up on the iron step, swung himself behind one of the cars. He knew nothing of his destination and that did not matter to him, but made, indeed the fascination of the moment. He breathed in quick breaths and stared about him with dilated eyes. By some miracle the old urge to live had returned to him.

The water had washed him clean of the prison. He was going toward some adventure. He was free. The old illusion of adventure beat hard in his blood again.



## The Jester

*By R. Lynn Riggs*

HERE on the broad street,  
Dodging men and cars,  
He squanders all the hours fleet  
Spouting to the stars;

Shouting to the high stars  
Some old tale  
When there were no honk-cars  
Or grape-fruit for sale;

Piping to the stars pale  
An old, old story—  
An ancient, gold, fool's tale  
Of forgotten glory.

Leaning on yesterday,  
He falters toward a goal  
Insecure, with eyes gay  
And one small soul.



# L'Ame de Ravelnar et le Sorcier Malgache

By Louis Carpeaux

**R**AVELNAR, ma jeune servante malgache, était devenue triste, malade. Elle se plaignait de maux de tête et prétendait qu'elle n'avait plus d'âme dans le corps. Personnellement, je la croyais seulement malade d'imagination, pour avoir mangé du canard, qui est un oiseau fady<sup>1</sup>. Mais Ramanatène, sa sœur, voulut que je consultasse le sorcier; et celui-ci me conseilla un pèlerinage au tombeau d'une aïeule de Ravelnar. Comme il ne me demandait pas d'argent pour m'y conduire, j'acceptai d'y aller, bien que ce tombeau fût situé en pleine forêt, à plus de deux jours de Fianar.

Toutefois, avant de partir pour la forêt, je résolus de consulter l'arrière-grand-père de ma servante, qui s'était rendu célèbre en érigeant, de son vivant, une immense pierre levée, couverte d'inscriptions destinées à l'immortaliser.

Cette pierre levée était ce qu'il aimait le plus au monde. Aussi, d'après Ravelnar, son âme y habitait-elle, et on pouvait lui parler, et peut-être savoir où était partie l'âme de la jeune fille.

Par une belle matinée ensoleillée, j'enfourchai un mulet. Ravelnar monta en filanzane, et nous partîmes consulter le célèbre aïeul.

Je refis avec plaisir cette jolie route d'Alakamiche, toujours fréquentée, animée par le flottement blanc des lambes malgaches.

Quand nous fûmes arrivés, Ravelnar, après avoir enterré une offrande en argent au pied du monument, le frappa de ses petites mains fragiles, armées d'un gros silex. Puis, vivement, elle colla

son oreille contre la colonne vibrante.

Que lui dit-elle? . . .

Plusieurs fois l'opération recommence. . . . Ravelnar est soucieuse.

Soudain, je la vois, jeter son caillou, cracher sur le monument et déterrer son obole! . . . L'aïeul n'avait pas daigné se déranger.

Ravelnar était absolument furieuse, autant que consternée. . . . C'est alors que l'idée me vint de forcer l'aïeul à répondre.

Suivant la coutume malgache en pareil cas, je pris cinq cailloux et, l'un après l'autre, les jetai sur le faite de la pierre levée.

Trois étant restées sur le sommet, l'aïeul avait parlé: c'était un ordre de départ.

Je me décidai donc immédiatement à partir dans la forêt, où reposait le corps de l'arrière-grand-mère, qui avait jadis occupé une situation importante à la cour des reines de Tananarive.

Le sorcier m'avait offert de me conduire au séjour de l'âme ancestrale, mais, quand il fallut partir, il exigea que je fisse tuer un bœuf, dont l'ombre nous accompagnerait et nous assurerait bon accueil. Cela tombait mal, car c'était justement fin de mois, et il ne me restait pas beaucoup à dépenser pour l'âme de ma "ramatou."

Enfin, je trouvai une occasion: un petit bœuf de soixante francs, que je fis immoler, et dont le sorcier, ce mangeur des bourses et des ombres, se régala pendant plusieurs jours.

Avant mon départ, Ramanatène, sœur de ma jeune amie, craignant qu'on ne volât aussi mon ombre, voulut que je

<sup>1</sup>Défendu.

me fisse frère de sang avec elle, pour me protéger.

A cet effet, toujours devant l'affreux sorcier, nous bûmes une gouttelette du sang de nos poitrines légèrement incisées.

Dès lors, chacun de nous possédait la moitié de l'autre, et nous devions tout mettre en commun, même notre argent. . . .

Et, si l'on me volait mon âme dans la forêt, Ramanatène, au retour, me donnerait la moitié de la sienne. . . .

Rassuré, et heureux d'être frère de sang de la jolie Ramanatène, je partis, un matin d'aurore sanglante, à la recherche de l'âme ancestrale.

Cette recherche n'était pas chose aisée. Le tombeau, oublié depuis des années et des années, se trouvait en pleine forêt, loin de tout sentier. . . .

Dans l'épais enchevêtrement de végétation, nous nous ouvrimus difficilement un passage, — plus exactement un tunnel!

Nous marchions sur un véritable matelas élastique, humide, formé d'arbres entiers, de branches, de brindilles en décomposition. De hautes herbes, de profonds entrelacements de lianes et de bambous protégeaient l'accès de ces lieux mystérieux, où la mort et la vie luttent dans un perpétuel recommencement. Et, quand nous débouchions sur une petite clairière, nous étions aussi heureux de revoir le jour que la caravane assoiffée d'apercevoir au loin une oasis. . . .

. . . . Seuls, quelques bourdonnements d'abeilles laborieuses arrivaient jusqu'à nous, du haut des grands arbres où ellés bâtissent leurs ruches d'écorce; seul, le cri plaintif du babakoute<sup>2</sup>, imitant le râle du moribond, nous faisait tressaillir, ou la grenouille des bois poussant son croassement étrange, qui ressemble au bruit d'un coup de hache sur un arbre caverneux.

Et nous avançons toujours dans la pénombre, la végétation de plus en plus épaisse, précédés par le sorcier qui, parfois, faisant éclater un tronc de bambou, s'y désaltérait bruyamment. Ra-

<sup>2</sup>Singe malgache à queue d'écureuil.

velnar se serrait contre moi, toute transie du mystère profond de ce séjour des ombres. . . .

Cependant nous voici enfin arrivés.

Tout proche d'un ruisseau glougloutant et pailleté d'argent par les rayons du soleil, se dessine faiblement un petit tertre que d'immenses, fougères arborescentes envahissent et enserrant.

C'est là que git l'aïeule, depuis deux siècles. . . . Répudiée, exilée, elle s'était enfuie à Fianar, où elle mourut de la lèpre, ce qui lui valut d'être exilée encore après sa mort, de reposer pour toujours dans ce lieu solitaire et grandiose.

J'étais ému, profondément impressionné, cependant que le sorcier préparait son sortilège: une assiette de riz miellé, enfermée dans un panier à couvercle.

Pour mieux attirer l'ombre gourmande, à côté du panier le sorcier a étalé du miel sur une feuille de bananier; et il injurie le ciel afin d'attirer l'ombre, de la réveiller. . . .

Puis un grand silence succède à ces imprécations. . . .

Accroupi au pied d'une gigantesque fougère, dont la dentelle me caresse le visage, Ravelnar tremblante à mes côtés, j'écoute, recueilli et ravi, les longs frémissements des bambous, les chuchotements des bananiers, les soupirs des fougères légères. . . .

Il semble que l'âme de l'aïeule anime ce paysage profondément mystérieux. Aussi ne suis-je pas trop étonné quand je vois le sorcier suivre du doigt dans l'air quelque chose qui, pour moi profane, reste invisible.

— Mon âme, voilà mon âme, murmure Ravelnar en extase. . . .

— Comment est-elle? demandé-je à voix basse.

— Toute blanche, en forme de cœur ailé. . . .

Mais, soudain, le sorcier bondit sur le couvercle du panier. D'un violent coup de poing, il referme le panier, sur lequel il a appuyé de toutes ses forces, en hurlant des paroles sacrées, incompréhensibles même pour Ravelnar.

L'âme de ma servante est prisonnière.

Sous son bras, le sorcier l'emporte, victorieux.

Nous suivons, dociles, jusqu'à Fianar. Là, dans ma maison, un véritable festin, composé surtout de viande de bœuf et de riz, avait été préparé. On mangea, on but à satiété.

Au dessert, le sorcier réclama le silence. . . .

Au milieu du recueillement général,

il ouvrit le panier, doucement, tout doucement. . . .

L'âme n'y était plus visible, — intimement confondue avec le riz sans doute.

Aussitôt Ravelnar, en hâte, avale tout le contenu de l'assiette — et, avec lui, sa propre âme qu'il contenait! . . .

Depuis lors, elle ne la perdit plus, — heureusement pour moi!



## Comparative

*By Jay Jarrod*

THE aged bachelor, robed and beslippered, sat by the fireside and gazed into the flames. He was thinking of all the mistakes that he had made during his life and sighed sadly. Suddenly his thoughts flashed to the mistakes that his married friends had made, and he shook with laughter till he fell off the chair.



## The Loss

*By M. G. Sabel*

IT isn't that I cannot love again.

You haven't broken me.

I'll not go to ruin because of you,

And my love for you.

It is only

That you have taken the glamor,

The nascent glory;

And on the day when I shall come to love again

There will be a matter-of-factness about it.





# Memoir

By James Spencer Vardon

I HAVE wooed women from the age of thirteen. I have chased them in every country in Western Europe, in all of the Americas and Africa. I have yet to engage the most intellectual of damsels who would not give her all to be the fuzzy-haired little cutie that fetches the fellows. I believe the silliest thing a woman can do is to appear sensible.

Years ago, I fell madly in love with an octoroon of sixteen, during which period I neither ate nor slept. The loveliest creature I ever beheld was a little pedler of gardenias at Covent Garden in 1907. She is now La Duchesse de la Roche-Martel Boisegur and has lost absolutely all her appeal. I have never courted more than three girls simultaneously, nor have I ever written a mash note or love letter in my life. When telephoning any woman, I always assume that my conversation is overheard by at least two other persons.

I am immediately placed on my guard when women inform me that I remind them of their first husbands.

The women who have interested me most, I have never known . . . the girl who passed through the lobby of the Hotel Bristol, in Vienna one afternoon in June, 1912; the auburn-haired creature I suddenly espied gazing at me from the rail of deck B on the *Aquitania* as the gangplank was withdrawn; the little shop-girl who sat opposite me in the Subway last month; the pouting Pierrette who tossed me a rose during a mad carnival at Nice and for whom I searched in vain till eight o'clock the next morning. . . .

I am wary of the woman who retains perfect control of herself after her ninth glass of champagne, and have never been able to detect the fascination of eloping. I believe that women are more skilful criminals than men.

The girl who seeks to attract my attention with such devices as chin-chilla, diamond bracelets, and sapphire ear drops is not for me.

I have invariably found that moonlight, Donizetti, and Springtime contribute far more to the seduction of woman than all the Scotch whiskey in the world. I am convinced that any man is a complete jackass who attempts to appeal to a woman's logic. Likewise, am I entirely unmoved by a gal's tears after her fourth Benedictine.

Women chairmen of boards appeal to me with the same potentiality as the Bearded Lady. I adore the ankles of the Genoese milliner, the teeth of the Wa-Kikuyan dancers, the complexion of the Partenkirchen *Backfisch*, and the viewpoint of the Parisian *cocotte*. When laying seige to a sweet thing, I endeavor to refrain from mentioning the other women in my life. I am strangely bored by people who dwell upon the distinction between infatuation and love.

Women who think it clever to be late for an appointment cherish this thought but once, so far as I am concerned. I believe that Suffragism was the death blow to Chivalry and consider it the height of idiocy to analyze a woman.

All women are nuisances.

S.S. June 1922

## Chronique Scandaleuse

By George Jean Nathan

I

ON last Christmas morning the theatrical reviewers of the New York newspapers received from a conspicuous producing manager, with his warm holiday wishes and as a testimonial of his high admiration for their exceptional talents, three quart bottles of rare ambrosial liquor. Two newspaper reviewers, during the next three weeks, alluded emphatically to the producing manager in their critiques as the foremost artist of the American theatre; another melancholiously deplored the hostility that had been shown the manager and his producing credo by certain flippant non-newspaper critics; and still another proved at length and with much gusto that, in comparison with this producing manager, Mr. Arthur Hopkins (who drinks all the liquor that he can lay his hands on himself) was a mere hansdoodle.

All this eulogy of the producing manager—apparently so sudden and surprising in view of the late perceptible cooling off of his erstwhile worshipers—was, of course, purely a matter of coincidence. I myself, for example, who was overlooked in the pleasant dispensation—beyond all doubt due to sheer oversight during the Yuletide confusion—at about the same time pointed out the manager's increasing taste in production. Blandly to pose myself here, therefore, as the one exceptionally honest and unbribable critic in New York merely on the ground that I happen to have a very large private stock of my own is surely not my intention. If I am honest, it is only because honesty seems to sell my

work better than dishonesty would, which is in itself a form of ethical dishonesty. And, as I have pointed out on more than one occasion, to say that I—or any other man—cannot be bribed is utter nonsense. If the producing manager in question, for instance, were to put on a pair of long black whiskers, meet me at midnight up a dark alley and offer me \$50,000 to say in print that he was the one and only true artist in the American theatre, I should accept immediately and, what is more, I should carry my shame so far as to admit frankly in my article that I had accepted the bribe for writing what I did. The trouble with most bribes is that they are not big enough. If a theatrical producer sent me three quarts of grog at Christmas, I should promptly send them back to him and suggest at least a full case or nothing, just as I should have returned to the producer of "Tangerine" his Christmas gold-plated pen and lead pencil—had he not also, doubtless due to the carelessness of his secretary, overlooked me—and hinted delicately for the solid gold article. I am open to persuasion at all times, but my trouble seems to be that no producer believes it. As a consequence I not only have to buy my own drinks and dinners (and sign the checks with my own wooden lead pencil) but—worse still—when a producer spies me in a restaurant and boldly takes it for granted that I am not snobbish, I have to buy his too. My reputation for unshakable honesty that has thus come to me is surely not of my own making, and is a nuisance. I am honest, but so is the superintendent of a poor-house.

But I deviate from the theme. In the

two months preceding the opening of a certain lately produced play, the playwright and his charming actress-wife gave a succession of affairs *intimes* at all of which the younger and perhaps more gregarious newspaper reviewers, together with a distinguished newspaper editor, were conspicuous guests. The conversation was very jolly; the playwright's cigarros are noted for the splendour of their bands and their sweet flavour; his actress-wife is reputed to be the greatest Welsh rabbit virtuosa this side of Wales; and gin, pineapple juice and a dash of Fernet Branca make a superb cocktail. The great night of the opening came. One of the young reviewers hailed the playwright's opus, a propaganda play directed against the immorality and danger of jazz dancing, as but a shade less masterly than Hauptmann at his finest, and the playwright's actress-wife, who played the leading rôle in it, as a supreme and breath-taking histrionic artiste. Another, though perhaps not quite so superlative, followed suit. And the distinguished and handsome newspaper editor hinted urbanely to his own reviewer—an older soul who had not been at the parties—that he considered both the playwright and his actress-wife absolutely thoroughbred artists and that he ventured to hope the reviewer was of the same opinion. The reviewer, one noticed in his morning's review of the play and the star, was.

All this eulogy of the playwright and his actress-wife, which did not stop with the first reviews, was, of course, as in the instance of the producing manager, the purest coincidence. I myself, for example, who for all my well-known tooth for Welsh rabbits was not a guest at the happy revels—unquestionably due to the carelessness of the mails and the constant going astray of letters—though I could detect nothing in the playwright's masterpiece, wrote praise of his wife's performance (I have always been a great admirer of her talents). Thus it would be idiotic to infer that I insinuate that a newspaper reviewer, even though still in his impressible years, would deliberately cozen the truth for a cheese

past prepared by a smiling and gracious lady.

## II

ONE now directs the baton to the oboes and ukeleles. There is a young actress, a relative of a preterlapsed public figure, whose assiduous adulatory tom-tom-ing by a number of the New York reviewers has for some time been a considerable mystery to such persons as, not being in the know, have failed to detect in the young actress' performances any warrant for the excitement. My own curiosity in the matter mounting, as with each successive performance the encomiums grew richer, I presently dispatched my personal colored detective, the invaluable Mr. Gitz Kraus, Harvard '08, to conduct an investigation. Although I do not vouch for the accuracy of the M. Kraus' findings, it appears from his confidential report that the erstwhile undecipherable eulogy of the young actress on the part of one newspaper is due to the fact that she is a god-child of the journal's directing editor, that the hosannahs of two other reviewers may or may not be due to the circumstance that the shrewd young actress conducts a "salon" of which each is, she confides to each of them, the leading light, and that the horn-blowing of still another reviewer, a competent but susceptible fellow, has been induced by still another reviewer who has on occasion acted as the young lady's paid press-agent. . . .

Walking up the Avenue with Mencken toward a moonful midnight of several months ago in pursuit of our bi-weekly practice of gazing in admiration at the façade of St. Thomas', it occurred to us that some diversion might be found in the *literaturklatsch* conducted nightly in the nearby studio of a writer who happens to be a mutual friend of ours. Among the literati, imbibii and beauty there assembled, we observed, and were introduced to, the woman who is without doubt the most charming of American actresses, a woman shortly discovered by us to be the possessor of a genial cynicism, a sharp and piercing humour,

and a talent for sly and lovely flattery that works upon its victim like Glauber's salt. Gradually, as the clock moved around to two, the gathering began to break up. The hostess presently retired; Mencken, tired of waiting for me to put on my hat, snoozed off in a large chair; and the subject of this discourse and myself persistently held our ground out in the dining-room over the mineral waters. With the eleventh seidel of mineral water I made bold to ask my fair companion how she had contrived so successfully to win over to a certain critically irrelevant cause which she had lately espoused—and victoriously—several of the young newspaper reviewers. "My dear boy," she beamed at me, and since I am more than forty, gray, and free from rheumatism only in the ears, the "boy" was not lost on me, "what"—and here she again filled my seidel for me—"what would you have done in a similar situation after a pleasant evening like this with me?" I answered that my eighteen years in the monastery of St. Sebastian at Monte San Angelo gave me confidence in stating that, despite her beauty, incontrovertible personal persuasiveness and talent for filling my seidel, I should have permitted her to influence me not in the least. . . . At four o'clock in the morning, the mineral water being all gone, I made my adieux. . . . A week later my interesting companion opened in a new play and gave a performance that was a disappointment. . . . Looking back at my review of her performance, I observe, however, that I somehow neglected to mention anything at all of its having been a disappointment and confined myself instead to a most eloquent tribute to the admirable quality of her speaking voice and to the hope that we might some day soon hear it in Shakespeare.

Well, I suppose that we are all human—I no less than my younger colleagues who admire the delightful Miss Barrymore—but this is not my point. My point is that it is not the business of a dramatic critic to be human. And human he inevitably will be if he is called "my dear boy." The place of the critic

is in the home. It is impossible for any man, save he be a disgusting boor, not to be influenced by charming personal friendships, by invitations to agreeable parties, by adroitly manœvered and convincingly propelled flattery, by gifts of schnapps and fancy lead pencils, by Corona Superbissimas and cocktails of gin, pineapple juice and a dash of Fernet Branca. Some of us are given to the pose that such things mean absolutely nothing to us, that we are not so absurdly to be hornswoggled from the path of duty and the pursuit of truth, but we know in our hearts that we are lying. Show me the critic who can go to a series of parties at a playwright's house, smoke the playwright's toothsome segars, drink the playwright's tasty liquor, and eat the playwright's wife's palatable Welsh rabbits—my own invitations, as I have said, doubtless went astray; the mails are getting very careless—and then write that the plays of the playwright are the flubdub they actually are, and I shall contribute \$10,000 to a bronze statue of the critic to be erected in Times Square. All that I can say is that I could not do it, and I am notoriously an evil-mannered, self-centered and pertinaciously nasty fellow, answerable only to God and the police.

### III

BUT again I digress from the theme. The baton now turns to the accordions and trombones. For several years—until a few months ago—it was a general cause for wonderment and speculation that a New York newspaper reviewer, conspicuously a "moral" critic who could not abide French drama in any form and who denounced the masterpieces of Porto-Riche, De Curel and Donnay out of hand on Methodistic grounds—that this reviewer should regularly praise, or at worst judiciously let down, the naughty plays produced from time to time by the Rev. Dr. A. H. Woods. And this the more so since the reviewer in question was not only not a cigar smoker, but a man who, if humorously susceptible to managerial and auctorial flattery, was yet honest almost

to the point of childish obstreperousness. My wayward curiosity being aroused as in the case of the excessive blarney in behalf of the young neo-Duse, I again summoned my private bloodhound, the percipient M. Kraus, and bade him sniff the mystery. After a period of nosings hither and thither, returned the talented M. Kraus with the key to the cipher. Once again I do not vouch for the accuracy of the M. Kraus' report, but present it merely for what it may be worth. This report brought to light the piquant news that the Rev. Dr. Woods, alone of all the New York producers, seemed to be an enthusiastic admirer of certain plays that the wife of the reviewer had composed and that had received a chilly reception in other managerial quarters, had with equal enthusiasm paid the usual advance royalties on one or more of them, and had with even greater enthusiasm promised a production or two as soon as he could surmount the difficulty of getting together a cast sufficiently capable of doing justice to such extraordinary masterpieces.

The case of this reviewer recalls that of another, since retired from active practice, who was even more peculiarly hospitable to the productions of a manager who by no stretch of the imagination could ever have been accused of putting on plays to the reviewer's otherwise fastidious classic taste. It developed that the admiration of this particular lover of Shakespeare for the type of play produced by the manager in point began shortly after the manager bought one of the gentleman's numerous play synopses, and that it increased as the manager bought a second, a third, and even a fourth. This was nine or ten years ago. The plays have never been elaborated and finished, and never produced.

What I here spread upon the minutes is surely not put forth as scandal; my intention is simply to entertain you with some more or less humorous undertones of metropolitan reviewing. As I have said before, it is not my purpose to expose and thus uplift. The world, as I

see it, is altogether too good as it is: a few assaults upon its trust and faith with the slapstick of satiric comedy must inevitably be of benefit to it. The notion that a theatre reviewer must be any more honest than, say, a lawyer, or a member of Congress, or an ambassador—each of whom is popularly respected for his talent for being anything but scrupulously honest—this notion eludes me. Why should a reviewer who writes with painstaking honesty that "The Demi-Virgin" is trash be looked on with greater respect and favour than a reviewer who writes with dubious honesty that it is not trash? What thehell difference does it make? What conceivable critical and artistic purpose can either reviewer, or either review, serve? Who cares, save it be the author and producer of "The Demi-Virgin" who, being the author and producer of "The Demi-Virgin," do not in the least matter? The reviewer who writes that "The Demi-Virgin" is trash may hurt trade, but that has nothing to do with criticism or with art. The reviewer who writes that "The Demi-Virgin" is not trash may help trade, but that has no more to do with criticism or with art. The reviewer's ethical honesty or dishonesty is thus of no moment in any consideration of the professional practice of æsthetic opinion. Nor has the indubitable fact that the reviewer who writes that "The Demi-Virgin" isn't trash is a jackass of the first carat any more bearing upon the matter. There are two New York reviewers who have set down their opinion that Hauptmann's "Weavers" is so much realistic junk. These opinions were honest opinions. What, in turn, does it matter? Would it not have been better had the two gentlemen been less honest? Absolutely honest critical opinion on the part of divers New York newspaper reviewers has, in the last twelve years, eulogized in terms of masterpieces such things as Charles Rann Kennedy's "The Army with Banners," George Broadhurst's "Bought and Paid For," John Drinkwater's "Mary Stuart," and Sidney Howard's "Swords." . . .



As the impertinent and often too cocksure author of "The Critic and the Drama" has pointed out, honesty is one of the chief besetting defects of metropolitan newspaper play reviewing. With perhaps two exceptions, there is not a newspaper reviewer in New York at the present time who is not more honest than the newspaper that employs him. The owner of one of the most important New York newspapers can be—and has been—effectively approached from time to time by social and financial interests; the man he employs as a play reviewer cannot be. But though these reviewers are honest, they are, some of them, adroitly to be tricked out of their honesty by various subtle stratagems, a few of which I have herein suggested. I wish to say, and say emphatically, that the reviewers are in such instances doubtless wholly unconscious of their having been tricked; and I wish to say, with equal emphasis, that it is often surely not the intention of the trickers to trick at all—certainly no producer is so great a fool as to believe that a five-dollar basket of fruit sent to a reviewer down with cystalgia will win a favourable review where one is not deserved—but results are results, and results are what concern us. The reviewer, though he be as honest as old John Kelly, is yet human; and if he places his human nature on the firing line, if he has personal relations, however slight, with those whom he must criticize, that human nature must inevitably sooner or later rise up on its hind legs to bark at his integrity. If a theatrical manager sent me a single small cup of beef broth while I was miserably ill, I am certain that, were I to accept it, I should somehow be colored in my critical attitude toward that manager. I might try hard not to be, but I know full well that in some little way—it might be *very* little—I would be prejudiced in his favour. And, surely, other men are not so different from me.

#### IV

WE turn now to the bassoons and harmonicas, to the matter of theatrical advertising and its effect upon play

reviewers. It is a popular belief that if a theatrical manager were to produce "Shenandoah" "in one" with a Yiddish tragedian in the role of General Sheridan and were to take out half-page advertisements in the newspapers, there would not be a play reviewer in New York who would not the next morning hail the production as a great masterpiece, and the producer as a brother to Reinhardt. The belief has long since taken its place in the American Credo, along with the notion that nicotine is a brownish substance that stains the teeth and fingers, that one can buy a Japanese girl from her father for immoral purposes for \$2.75, and that the Hon. Arthur James Balfour is so Machiavelian a diplomat that he could assemble all the Presidents of the United States from George Washington down to Harding in a rathskeller and, by the exercise of his smile alone, at the end of fifteen minutes easily swindle them out of Alaska, the Philippines and all the money in the United States Treasury, and at the end of twenty, after a jolly handshake, depart with their watches, loose change, trousers and underdrawers. Yet for all the vitality of the belief it has small basis in fact. Save for one evening and one morning New York newspaper, there is none whose reviewer is instructed directly or indirectly to adjust the tone of his criticisms to the amount of advertising inserted by the producer. Thus, with the two exceptions referred to, the average New York reviewer gives no more thought to the matter of his paper's advertising revenue than he gives to the application of electromagnetism as a motive power, the entomology of Australia, or the drama of Per Hallström.

But though there is no direct connection between the tone of criticism and the amount of advertising space, one often observes in the instance of at least two reviewers noted for their critical timidity a peculiar and unaccustomed bravado when writing of the productions periodically made by such newer producers and irregular advertisers as, say, Mr. Henry Baron, and by such experi-

mental organizations and equally irregular advertisers as, say, the Players' Assembly. I do not intimate that this bravado is founded upon dishonesty. I merely observe that it is a trifle puzzling. Subconsciously, it may be, the reviewers feel that the many thousands of dollars spent annually for advertising by Mr. Erlanger, or the Shuberts, or Mr. Dillingham, although they need not influence critical opinion, at least deserve a measure of reciprocal politesse that is not necessary in the case of a little producer who puts on a play only now and then and whose yearly advertising bill does not run higher than a few hundreds of dollars. It is possible that I misjudge the situation. Yet, after watching it closely for fifteen years and more, I cannot resist a small wink of the eye. The reviewer appreciates—doubtless subconsciously—that he can go the limit in the case of the little producer without running any risk of embarrassment from the little producer's indignant visit to his boss, just as he appreciates—also doubtless subconsciously—that an equal indignation on the part of a producer whose annual advertising bill was \$80,000 or \$90,000 would prove rather disquieting. This latter ghost of a thought is ever more or less present in the back of his mind. He may rest perfectly secure in the knowledge that, even were the big advertiser to invade the sanctum of his chief and demand his scalp, his chief would stand by him and shoo the invader out into the cold, but a wish for peace and comfort, the wish, perhaps, of all men over forty, subconsciously pulls him back a trifle with its sweetly irresistible check-rein.

Not long ago the reviewer on a New York morning newspaper, in the course of a review of the attraction then playing there, alluded to the Century Theatre as "a mausoleum." The following day the Messrs. Shubert withdrew from the newspaper their advertising, which ran to a yearly total of \$30,000. A few days later the reviewer, backed by his editors and the owners of the paper, began a series of articles attacking the Shuberts and accusing them of every-

thing from the corruption of dramatic art to diabetes. Now, it is reasonable to assume that the newspaper in question cherished this view of the Messrs. Shubert during the period in which it was accepting their 30,000 simoleons and reviewing their productions with more or less sympathy. The newspaper was surely not visited by a divine messenger in a dream the night the Messrs. Shubert withdrew their \$30,000 worth of advertising and made suddenly privy to all the things it began forthwith to print against them. If, then, the newspaper knew all these things about the Messrs. Shubert while it was accepting their \$30,000 worth of advertising, why did it not, being a newspaper, have its reviewer write them? If it did not know them until the information was vouchsafed it by the angel in the dream, why did it publish them so quickly upon the heels of the withdrawal of the advertising? Once again I affirm with my hand upon my heart and my eyes to the roof of the Singer Building that there may be no connection between the withdrawal of the advertising and the trotting out of the bean-shooter; I merely light a fresh cigar, take a deep puff, lay it down on Waldo Frank's "Rahab," and blow my nose.

Although the reviewing on the majority of New York newspapers is not influenced in the slightest by advertising—the case of the New York Times' support of its reviewer in the late conflict with the Messrs. Shubert affords an example—one wonders how fair the reviews of a producer's attractions would continue to be were the producer to withdraw all his advertising from a newspaper and yet, with perfect cordiality, invite the reviewer of the newspaper to pass upon the various plays that he presented. Let us say, for example, that Mr. Arthur Hopkins concluded for one reason or another to advertise no longer in this or that New York newspaper. Let us say, further, that he then produced, in the next six months, a half dozen plays and sent the newspaper in question the usual seats, requesting it to pass judgment upon

them. Would the newspaper, through its reviewer, treat the productions of Mr. Hopkins exactly as it would have treated them had he not declined to advertise? I simply pose the question, and retire again to my cigar and handkerchief.

The newspaper's obvious answer to all this is that, since there is nothing that compels it to review Mr. Hopkins' plays, whether he advertises or does not advertise, it need not review them at all, whether fairly or unfairly. But like so many obvious answers, this one is not true. If a newspaper sets itself seriously to criticize drama in any degree—and three-fourths of the New York newspapers make at least a pretense of such serious reviewing—it is in duty bound to report and criticize drama whoever the producer may be, and whether he advertises or not. If a newspaper takes the liberty of criticizing the productions of one manager from a level higher than the box-office, if it professes to view drama as an art and not as a trade, it cannot discriminate against another manager, advertiser or no advertiser. Its business is not with managers, but with drama. It either has a dramatic critical department, or it hasn't one. It can no more say that it will review the productions at the Booth Theatre and not those at the Plymouth than it can say that it will review the news at one police station but not at another.

## V

THE coda approaches. The bass-drummer, in anticipation, sneaks a chew of tobacco, wipes the perspiration from his brow, and shoots back his right cuff.

The reviewer, as I have said, is—like you and me—only human. And it is this humanness that, once he permits himself any relations with those whom he must criticize, inevitably plays upon

him its sardonic pranks. One New York reviewer, an honest fellow, writes a book and a series of articles for the *Saturday Evening Post* for a certain producer to sign. The reviewer makes considerable honest money out of his work for the certain producer. And his reviews of the certain producer's plays during and for some time after the period of composition are confounded to a degree by the amiability that he obviously feels toward the producer—an amiability that you or I would unquestionably similarly feel under the same circumstances. . . . Another reviewer, equally honest, belongs to a club among whose members are several actors. The actors are pleasant fellows; they are well-liked by the other members of the club; the reviewer, while not close friends with them, meets them at luncheon and dinner occasionally with the rest of the club members. The actors, though agreeable in the club, now and then give very poor performances on the stage. But can the reviewer denounce them as he would actors who are not members of his club and who, at luncheon the next day, would not embarrassingly be found sitting next to him? . . . Still another reviewer writes a play, sells it to a manager, and has it produced. It is not a bad play, but it fails, and the manager—not a rich one—loses a great deal of money. The manager five weeks later tries to recoup his losses by producing a frank box-office bumper, a very shoddy piece of dramatic writing. The reviewer knows perfectly well that the box-office bumper is awful stuff, but, in view of the manager's losses on his own play, has he it in his heart to write the truth? Would you have? Would I have? We wouldn't—and he hasn't. And he writes—turn to the files for verification—that it is a most amusing entertainment, "ingenious, well written, and thoroughly worth the price charged to get in."



# Demagoguery as Art and Science

By H. L. Mencken

I

WALTER LIPPMANN'S "Public Opinion" (Harcourt) leaves me with a feeling not unlike that which ensues upon the ingestion of near-beer. I am full, but not at all satisfied. It is a sober and earnest book and it is an extremely laborious book, but it seems to me that it gets to no recognizable goal and that it throws very few new lights upon the dark and tortuous road it traverses. What Mr. Lippmann says about public opinion under democracy, in his volume of 418 pages, is simply that it is ignorant, credulous, superstitious, timid and degraded—which might have been said just as well in a hundred words. The evidences that he amasses do not appear to be new, nor is there anything novel about the generalizations he deduces from them. You will find the same stuff, sometimes far more charmingly presented, in many other books: Graham Wallas' "Human Nature in Politics," George Santayana's "Character and Opinion in the United States," James N. Wood's "Democracy and the Will to Power," Everett Dean Martin's "The Behavior of Crowds"—even in Gustave Le Bon's half-forgotten pioneer treatise, "The Crowd." Mr. Lippmann was a pupil at Harvard of the late William James, and in more than one place the weight of his argument rests upon the master's psychological realism. But his conclusions belong far more to the romantic Liberalism of half a dozen years ago than to any system so harsh as pragmatism. His *coda*, in fact, reminds me strongly of the mystical gurgle at the end of James Bryce's "Modern Democracies." What he says,

in brief, is that we must keep on hoping that the mob will one day grow intelligent, despite the colossal improbability of it. There have appeared in the world, at various times since the time of Christ, occasional intelligent individuals. Even in our own time a few have been reported. Well, then, why not assume that there will be more and more hereafter? If you do, you will be happy. If you don't, "the Lord Himself cannot help you."

All this seems to me to be a gigantic begging of the question, which, in plain terms, is this: how, *in spite* of the incurable imbecility of the great masses of men, are we to get a reasonable measure of sense and decency into the conduct of the world? The Liberal answer (much more clearly stated by H. G. Wells in "The Outline of History" than by Mr. Lippmann in the present book) is, in essence, simply a variant of the old democratic answer: by spreading enlightenment, by democratizing information, by combatting what is adjudged to be false by what is adjudged to be true. But this scheme, however persuasively it may be set forth, invariably goes to wreck upon two or three immovable facts. One is the fact that a safe majority of the men and women in every modern society are congenitally uneducable, save within very narrow limits—that it is no more possible to teach them what every voter theoretically should know than it is to teach a chimpanzee to play the *viol da gamba*. Another is the fact that the same safe majority, far from having any natural yearning to acquire this undescribed body of truth, has a natural and apparently incurable distrust of it,

and seldom accepts it, even in its most elemental and obvious forms, save after desperate resistance and at the point of the sword. A third (and it is more important than either of the other two) is that there exists no body of teachers in Christendom capable of teaching the truth, even supposing it to be known—that the teacher, almost *ex officio*, seems to be sworn to corrupt it and put it down—that the inevitable tendency of pedagogy, as Mr. Wood shows in the book I have mentioned, is to preserve and propagate the lies that happen to be currently respectable, which is to say, that happen to be salubrious to the current masters of the mob. In support of this last I pass over the whole corps of professional pedagogues, who are admittedly too stupid to teach the truth or even to recognize it, and point to two teachers extraordinary, to wit, Mr. Wells and Mr. Lippmann himself. Both, during the late war, consecrated their talents to the official enlightenment of the vulgar. Both, in the conduct of that enterprise, lent their authority and their dignity to the propagation of nonsense—some of it nonsense that was deliberately disingenuous and unquestionably evil. One worked for the Right Hon. David Lloyd George and the other for Dr. Wilson. Well, what is the difference between working for two such frauds and working for Senator Lusk, Judge Gary and the Ku Klux Klan?

## II

THE fact is, of course, that it is absolutely hopeless to think of filling the great masses of men with even the most elemental sense—that the dream of Mr. Lippmann has no more probability of realization than the dream of a man who has sniffed nitrous oxide. To discuss it seriously is simply to talk in terms of Liberal astrology. I do not deny, to be sure, that the great masses of men can take in certain sorts of knowledge, at least within narrow limits. Fully 80% of the inhabitants of the United States, within our own time, have absorbed a number of solid facts, before unknown

to them—for example, that beer is easy to make in the kitchen, that wood alcohol has various unpleasant physiological effects, and that it is dangerous to crank a Ford. Probably half as many have taken in information of a somewhat wider and more philosophical kind—for example, that the guarantees in the Bill of Rights are merely rhetorical, that saving the world for democracy costs a great deal of money, that feeding a human infant on fried liver will not make it flourish, and that every old woman who mumbles as she shuffles along is not a witch. Go back a thousand years, and you will be able to show even greater accretions of knowledge, much of it sound. The average member of the American Legion, though the professors may report him a moron, knows more, I am convinced than the average legionary of Caesar's Gallic army, and what he knows is better organized. The average American farmer, though he voted for Bryan, is more intelligent than the average peasant of Charlemagne's time. Even the average American Congressman, at least in matters that do not concern his business of law-making, probably has more useful information in him than the average member of a Tenth Century Witenagemot.

But it is easy to overestimate this growth of knowledge and intelligence among the lower orders of men, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Nineteenths of the positive facts that such men acquire are superficial, unorganized and unimportant. For eight years past the whole American people have rocked and sweated under the incessant discussion of the fundamental problems of international politics, and vast hordes of gifted soothsayers, including Mr. Lippmann himself, have devoted themselves to spreading enlightenment on the subject. But if you go to the nearest polling place at the next election, and ask the first ten men and women in line to give you a coherent account of even the simplest of those problems, the answers that you will get from at least eight of them will be wholly idiotic. Even in more



important matters the horse-power of public sagacity is vastly less than romantic democrats assume. I believe that at least a majority of the people of the United States, after a century and a half of education, still believe firmly in ghosts—and when I say at least a majority I really mean two-thirds. In the city of Baltimore, of which I am a citizen, the police lately found themselves confronting a murder mystery that was far beyond their intelligence. Quite as a matter of course they turned to a spiritualist for help, and when she laid the crime to an obviously innocent man they promptly arrested him and put him into jail. The accused was released at the order of a police commissioner who happened to be a former army colonel, and hence an agnostic in idealistic and transcendental affairs. But the point is that the great majority of Baltimoreans saw nothing strange about the proceeding of the cops, and showed absolutely no indignation over it. They believed in spirits just as they had once believed in the childish gibberish of Dr. Wilson. It was a belief inherited unchanged from their savage ancestors of the European swamps. Two thousand years of so-called civilization had not changed it in the slightest. Nor has there been any change in scores of other such fundamental superstitions. The Knight of Pythias of today, setting aside a few unimportant facts, believes almost precisely what was believed by the slaves who built Cheops' pyramid.

In brief, the progress of enlightenment affects the great masses of men but little; it is a matter which concerns exclusively a small minority of men. The size of that minority is always grossly overestimated. Whole classes of men are counted in it without any inquiry as to the actual intelligence of their members. Because a man is a Ph. D. and licensed to teach Latin grammar it is assumed that he is generally intelligent—that he shares, to some extent at least, in the stupendous miscellaneous knowledge of a Virchow or a Huxley. The assumption is often false. He may be, in fact, practically an imbecile, and not

infrequently he actually is. I once knew a man holding a teaching post in a respectable university who threw it up in order to become a Christian Science healer. I know a United States Senator who wears a rheumatism string. Sir Oliver Lodge believes in spooks. The President of the United States subscribes to the doctrines of the United Brethren. Dr. Wilson, for long viewed universally as a master mind, has written books that are inaccurate and nonsensical, and is so stupid that he had got to Paris before ever he heard of the secret treaties—an evidence of mental deficiency in the learned that lately gave great concern to Mr. Lippmann. I do not here argue, of course, that the intelligence of a man is to be determined by subjecting him to an examination like that recently proposed by Thomas A. Edison. Edison himself, indeed, though he could pass his own examination, must be thick-witted at bottom, for when he goes on a holiday he chooses such men as Harding and Henry Ford as his companions. But what I do argue is that no man can be said to share fully in the progress of human knowledge who is ignorant of any of its basic facts—for example, the facts that ghosts do not actually haunt graveyards, that malaria is not caused by miasmas, that printing paper money cannot make a nation rich, and that men cannot be made virtuous by law.

It is possible, of course, that many, or even all such facts have a touch of mortality in them—that greater knowledge may conceivably modify them, or displace them. But in so far as the human mind, in its present stage of development, can determine, they are true today, and their truth is accepted unquestionably by all men whose fitness for judging them is of a special and superior character. If it be admitted that the human intelligence can function at all, then it must be admitted that they are, to all practical intents and purposes, true. Yet there are whole categories of such facts which the generality of human beings reject, and other whole categories of which they have never so much

as heard. It is my contention that this failure to take them in is congenital and incurable—that only a small minority of men are capable of grasping them at all. If that notion be sound—and I believe that the whole of human experience supports it—then it follows that no imaginable scheme of education will ever bridge the gap between the great masses of men and the intelligent minority. The former, by dint of terrific effort, may be gradually inoculated with certain simple facts, and so, in a sense, it may be said to make progress, but no matter how fast it is cajoled and goaded into moving, the minority will move ten times as fast. The gap, indeed, is constantly widening. The distance, intellectually, between a Huxley and an Iowa *mushik* is at least ten times as great, I believe, as the distance between a Socrates and the average Greek citizen of his time. The human race, I begin to suspect, is actually splitting into two distinct species. The one species is characterized by an incurable thirst for knowledge, and an extraordinary capacity for recognizing and taking in facts and evidences. The other is just as brilliantly marked by a chronic appetite for whatever is most palpably false and a chronic distrust for whatever is most palpably true. To the second species belong the overwhelming majority of individuals under democracy, including all of the favorite politicians, philosophers, theologians, star-gazers and diviners. These half-wits now run the world.

### III

THE dilemma is recognized by Mr. Lippmann in his book, but he seems quite blind to the concrete problem that it presents. That problem is not to discover some way to educate the majority up to the level of the minority—for the business, if my contention holds water, is a physical impossibility—but to devise ways and means whereby the minority may gain control of the majority. As things stand, it has no such control; on the contrary, it is almost lacking in influence politically, as it is

culturally. The great nations of the world are run today, not by their first-rate men, nor even by their second-rate or third-rate men, but by groups of professional mob-masters, all of them ignorant and most of them corrupt. As democracy spreads, the grip of these mobmasters becomes firmer and firmer. There was a time in the history of England when such an Englishman as Gilbert Murray or Havelock Ellis might have had some chance of rising to high office in the state, and, what is far more important, some chance of bringing his superior intelligence and integrity to the determination of national policies, but that time has plainly passed. Today it is the mob that decides who shall rule, and the choice of the mob, when it is free, is always for some man who reasons in terms of its own brutish ignorance, and shows all its own disregard for decency and honor. The chief man in England, under that system, is the Lloyd George aforesaid—a man of whom it would be flattery to say that he has the honesty of a press-agent and the dignity of a bawdy-house keeper. It would be difficult, indeed, to find in the whole Empire a man who stands further from the common concept of a statesman and a gentleman. His politics is frankly selfish; he will sacrifice anything to have and hold his job. His ideas, in so far as they are intelligible at all, are on the level of a stockbroker's. His word of honor is worth absolutely nothing.

Well, how does it come that such a man reaches so high an estate in a great nation—and in every other great nation, under democracy, there are scoundrels to match him? It comes very simply. He is, *imprimis*, so near to the mob in his natural ways of thought—his gross self-seeking and lack of sensitiveness, his tendency to reduce all ideas to hollow formulæ, his feeling of kinship for ignorant and degraded men—that it is easy for him to put himself into their collective mind, and just as easy for him to make them respond to the processes of his own. He is, *zum zweiten*, so lacking in ordinary

professional pride and conscientiousness that he is willing to submit with alacrity to the mob's mandates, even when he dissents from them and regards them as dangerous and wrong. He is, *troisième-ment*, enormously skilful at appealing to the savage prejudices that lie in the depths of its consciousness, even below the level of its primitive ratiocination—the great body of ignoble hopes and poltroonish fears out of which flow all its customary rages and enthusiasms. In brief, he is a demagogue, and his power rests wholly upon his talent for that rôle. What keeps him in office—and all his French, German, American and Italian peers with him—is not any special capacity for the duties of his office, nor even any special liking for them *per se*, but simply his tremendous capacity for evoking the emotions of the mob. He knows how to make it exult and he knows how to make it tremble. Knowing that much, he is master of the whole art of practical politics under democracy. No appeal to logic and the facts can stay him, and no appeal to decency can daunt him.

The problem of democratic government thus narrows down to this: how is the relatively enlightened and reputable minority to break the hold of such mountebanks upon the votes of the anthropoid majority? At first glance, the thing seems to be insoluble. Of the three characters of the demagogue that I have rehearsed, the first two are quite unimaginable in any man worthy of being called a member of the enlightened minority. If his ways of thought were the ways of the mob, he would simply go over to the majority. If he had no professional pride and conscientiousness he would go the same route. So far the quest is obviously hopeless. But a third character remains, and in it I venture to find more consolation. The man of education and self-respect may not run with the mob and he may not yield to it supinely, but what is to prevent him deliberately pulling its nose? What is to prevent him playing upon its fears and credulities to good ends as a physician plays upon them by giving its members

bread-pills, or as a holy clerk, seeking to bring it up to relative decency, scares it with tales of a mythical hell? In brief, what is to prevent him swallowing his political prejudices (as he now has to swallow his prejudices in other directions in the interest of public decorum) in order to channel and guide the prejudices of his inferiors? It may be, at first blush, an unsavory job—but so is delivering a fat woman of twins an unsavory job. Yet obstetricians of the first skill and repute do it—if the fee be large enough. So is hearing the confessions of Freudian old maids. Yet priests do it. So is going to war. Yet the chivalry of the world has just done it.

What I propose, in truth, has been done already—by men of very considerable intelligence, and to brilliant effect. I allude to the boob-bumping that was undertaken during the late war by certain members of the *intelligentsia*—many of them, of course, fakes, but a few of them genuine enough. These performers took to the business for motives that sometimes brought them into contact with the second character of a demagogue; that is to say, they seized the drum-stick because it was more comfortable wielding it than going into the trenches. But if we forget that possible descent from the higher integrity, the fact remains that they performed their duties very skilfully and effectively. Some of the most potent raids upon the boob emotions made during those days were planned and executed, in fact, by men who are normally too sniffish to engage in any such enterprise. All I argue is that what they did once they can do again—that if they devoted themselves to the arts of the demagogue in peace times as ardently and ingeniously as they did in war times, they would present a very formidable opposition to the standardized buncombe of the Bryans, Roosevelts, Hardings, Cabot Lodges, Cal Coolidges and other such professionals, and perhaps debase the booboisie into accepting ideas of a relatively high soundness. Not, of course, as ideas, but as emotions. As a matter of bald sense or decency, I be-

lieve, it is a sheer impossibility to induce the mob to do or believe anything. But as a matter of fear it is possible to make it do or believe almost everything. The demagogue is a man who is privy to this fact. There will come a change in the conduct of the world when men of intelligence and integrity also become privy to it, and, being privy to it, act upon it boldly and vigorously.

## IV

THE thing, I need not add, is not quite so simple as I have here made it appear. Before one may scare the plain people one must first have a firm understanding of the bugaboos that most facilely alarm them. One must study the schemes that have served to do it in the past, and one must study very carefully the technic of the chief current professionals. If American political biography were worth anything at all, it would be full of sound information in this department. But, as I have so often argued in this place, it is chiefly romantic and dishonest. Abraham Lincoln, one of the most adept masters of the mob that ever lived, is depicted in all the lives of him as an idealist and visionary comparable to Abelard or Thomas à Kempis. Roosevelt, a performer so bold that sometimes even his dupes revolted, is seen in the innumerable volumes of his relatives and other *pediculi* as a moody altruist of the foreign missions variety. What is needed is a realistic investigation of the careers of all such successful virtuosi, at home and abroad, and a scientific attempt to deduce the principles upon which they worked—above all, a scientific presentation of the fundamental mental and gastric processes of the mobs upon which they exercised their art. I hereby give public notice that I am engaged upon such a treatise, and solicit the patronage of the nobility and gentry. I have been gathering materials for it, in fact, for twenty years, and some of the principles of the new science already begin to clarify in my mind. The book, when it is finished at last, may be incomplete as to its facts

and inaccurate in some of its deductions, but I offer you every assurance that it will at least be honest—that it will be grounded upon what I have actually observed, in history and in current politics, and not upon *a priori* theories. Nobody realizes better than I do that I am not the ideal author for it. My interest in politics has always been that of an observer, not that of a participant, and so I lack the delicate knowledge that comes only with personal experience. But a man up a tree, in certain human concerns, sees more than a man on the ground, and perhaps that may be true also in politics. In any case, no one else seems to be willing to do the work. The practical politicians are no doubt afraid that they would be lynched if they gave the secrets of their craft away, and the political amateurs among the *intelligentsia*, as the book of Mr. Lippmann shows, are too academic to grapple with realities. So I consecrate myself to the enterprise.

## V

## Brief Notices

BENEDETTO CROCE, by Raffaello Piccoli (*Harcourt*). An extremely clear and useful account of the development of the celebrated Italian metaphysician's chief ideas. The author, though born and educated in Italy, writes English with great skill and charm. The best book on Croce that I have yet encountered.

WOMAN FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM, by Ralcy Husted Bell (*Cosmopolis*). Eloquent stuff, chiefly nonsensical, in the manner of a chautauqua orator.

UP STREAM, by Ludwig Lewisohn (*Boni*). Perhaps the finest document produced by the late war in the United States. A tale of illusion and disillusion, simply, honestly and movingly told. I reviewed it at length in the *Nation* for April 12.

AMERICAN PORTRAITS, by Gamaliel Bradford (*Houghton*). Sharp character studies of Mark Twain, Henry James, Sidney Lanier, James McNeill Whistler, James G. Blaine, Grover Cleveland, Henry Adams and Joseph. The first volume of a seven-volume work that is to cover all the more significant Americans since 1600. Some of the subjects are scarcely worth the toil of the author, but his method is always scien-

tific and intelligent. I printed a long review of the book in the *Literary Review* for April 8.

WHO'S WHO AMONG NORTH AMERICAN AUTHORS (*Golden Syndicate*). A vanity gallery for authors so bad that they are barred out of "Who's Who in America." The biographical sketches of some of the worst of them are accompanied by portraits.

HEAVENS, by Louis Untermeyer (*Harcourt*). A book of capital burlesques in prose and rhyme. Like the Englishman, J. C. Squire, Untermeyer is simultaneously in practise as critic, as poet and as parodist. He is clearly superior to Squire in every department.

SILHOUETTES CRÉPUSCULAIRES, by Carola Ernst (*Lamartin*). The story of a Belgian woman who, toward the end of 1914, took a blinded French officer from Belgium, through Germany and Switzerland, to his home in France. A work of excellent quality, well deserving translation.

STREAKS OF LIFE, by Ethel Smyth (Knopf). Random reminiscences of the celebrated English woman composer. The chapter on the Empress Eugénie and that upon Queen Victoria are capital character sketches. The long one upon the author's adventures in Berlin, preceding the first performance of her opera, "Der Wald," throws a curious light upon a certain weakness in the Anglo-Saxon character. By her own showing the Germans were enormously kind to her. She was helped generously by Prince von Bülow and other such magnificoes, and even the Kaiser, who frankly disliked her music, was very polite. She now repays these courtesies by fulminating against the Germans in the manner of Horatio Bottomley, and even sneers at those who invited her into their houses.

PSYCHOLOGIE DES JÜDISCHEN GEISTES, by S. M. Melamed (*Schwetschke*). An attempt by a Jew to investigate the history of Jewish ideas and the race psychology of the Jews. A learned and valuable work. First printed in 1912; now revised.

AN ENGINEER'S NOTEBOOK, by William McFee (*Stewart*). A reprint of various casual essays, most of them book reviews, by the author of "Captain Macedoine's Daughter." He is far more persuasive as a novelist.

THE GREAT RELIEVER, by George Frederick Gundelfinger. (*New Fraternity*.) An extremely bad play.

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN, by Reginald Stewart Moxon (*Allen*). A solemn and very instructive treatise, by a Cambridge don, upon the variations in the definition of sin since the time of Christ. The author is so advanced that in his last chapter he locates the seat of sin in the unconscious. Nevertheless, he is a firm believer in free will, and holds that the righteous man can, should and will keep his unconscious well policed. A book well worth reading.

THE LIFE OF LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, by Alexander Wheelock Thayer (*Beethoven Association*). Thayer, who died in 1897, began this monumental work in 1849, and spent practically the whole of his adult life upon it. That a Massachusetts Yankee should consecrate himself to such a labor is almost inconceivable; nevertheless, this one did so. When he finished his first volume, in the '60's, no American or English publisher would touch it, and so it had to be brought out in a German translation. Since then it has been revised and re-revised in German, until Thayer's original three volumes have grown to five. Now, for the first time, the author's own manuscript comes to type in his native tongue. It is a work that genuinely deserves the adjective colossal. I have been reading it, off and on, for two or three weeks—always vowing that the chapter I am at will be the last, and always plunging on. The thing has the fascination of a hanging, a dog-fight, a fugue. It is gigantic, monumental, overwhelming. Thayer tracked down every imaginable fact to its secret lair. He traveled all over Europe, and never grew weary. The result is a biography that exhausts the subject—a biography with only one blemish. Thayer, as I say, was a New Englander, and so he grows a bit shy whenever the time comes to discuss Beethoven's amours, many of which were of a variety that no Y.M.C.A. secretary would approve. But this is, after all, a small defect in so stupendous a work. I shall read it to the end, and then go back to it ever and anon, all the rest of my life, and read parts of it again. The final editing was done by H. E. Krehbiel. It shows enormous knowledge and very sound judgment.





**STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF SMART SET.**

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STATE OF NEW YORK } ss.  
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George Jean Nathan, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of Smart Set, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York City; Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Managing Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Business Manager, E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City. 2. That the owners are: Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York City; E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City; George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Estate of E. F. Crowe, 35 West 42nd St., New York City. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; E. F. Crowe (Estate), 35 West 42nd St., New York City; Mrs. E. Mann-Vynne, 8 West 45th St., New York City; Wm. D. Mann (Estate), 8 West 45th St., New York City. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) GEORGE JEAN NATHAN, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of March, 1922.  
[SEAL.] A. W. SUTTON, Notary Public.  
(My commission expires March 30, 1922.)

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